

A
'74
P3

SPIRITUAL HEALING:
ITS THEORY AND APPLICATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Religion

by
William Alan Payne
June 1974

PERMISSION TO COPY
113

This dissertation, written by

William Alan Payne

*under the direction of— his — Faculty Committee,
and approved by its members, has been presented
to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of
Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF RELIGION

Faculty Committee

Frank W. Simpson

Eric L. Titus

Date March 20, 1994

Joseph C. Hirsch, Jr.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NEW BEING TO HEALTH AND DISEASE	7
THE EXISTENTIAL CONDITION OF MAN	7
THE NEW BEING	17
THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE	25
III. A MEDICINE OF THE WHOLE PERSON	36
A MEDICAL-SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS	36
ILLNESS AND THE WHOLE PERSON	49
HEALTH AND THE WHOLE PERSON	55
IV. THE USE OF PRAYER IN HEALING	62
A METHOD OF SPIRITUAL HEALING	62
OBSTACLES TO HEALING	69
REDEMPTION AND HEALING	74
THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT	80
V. CONCLUSION	90
BIBLIOGRAPHY	100

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The phrase "spiritual healing" has been used and abused in many different ways. The meaning of the phrase has become quite vague for most people. The whole area of spiritual healing has traditionally produced feelings of suspicion and mistrust, especially on the part of the medical profession. The roots of these feelings reach far back into church history. During the early centuries of the church's beginning, healing was seen as an integral part of the Christian ministry. Healing of the body through prayer was not uncommon during this early period. But as the church became more established and organized, it became more concerned about matters of office and authority. It became less concerned about the miracle-producing faith which was so essential in its initial beginnings as described, for example, in the book of Acts. Miracles of healing through prayer became less evident. The church tried to justify the disappearance of healing miracles by teaching that sickness was sent by God for the disciplining of man and therefore man must willingly submit to its effects. Miracle-producing rituals such as the anointing with oil became merely empty gestures. This particular ritual eventually became the last sacrament administered to the dying. Through lack of faith, the sacrament of anointing became an outward form, devoid of its original healing power.

Through the years, the church actually became hostile toward the science of healing. Tampering with the natural functioning of bodily organs was soon looked upon as evil in the eyes of God. In 1248 the dissection of corpses and the study of anatomy was forbidden by the church.¹ Since the church was quite influential during this period the science of healing had to struggle desperately in order to be recognized as a valid endeavor. This kind of situation produced the suspicion and mistrust which has existed between the doctors and the church for so long.

Today the situation is more hopeful. New discoveries in psychosomatic medicine have opened new areas in which doctors and clergymen can work together. Modern medicine is beginning to see the need for treating the whole person rather than just the physical body. Doctors are beginning to admit that elements such as the patient's hopes, fears, aspirations and moral faults are closely related to the physiological processes of the body.² Clergymen are also beginning to modify the rigid views which they had held throughout the centuries. They are beginning to realize that religion must concern itself with the whole man, not just his spiritual aspirations or his sinfulness. These new realizations are causing the church to examine methods of counseling appropriate for the Christian community. Likewise, a new interest has been aroused in the effect of prayer

¹Dorothee Hoch, Healing and Salvation (London: Camelot Press, 1958), p. 21.

²Alice Graham Ikin, New Concepts of Healing (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. 72.

on the physical body. One of the prominent organizations in the church today concerned with healing within the context of religion is the Order of St. Luke, which is associated with the Episcopal Church. Their official journal, Sharing, contains many fine articles concerning the relationship between healing and prayer. This organization is helping to restore spiritual healing to its rightful place in the life of the established church of today.

In light of the growing interest in spiritual healing this dissertation represents one attempt to define the theory and application of spiritual healing in a systematic way. By way of introduction Edgar Sanford has offered the following general definition of spiritual healing: "Spiritual healing is a form of therapy that seeks to promote health through the spiritual efforts of those who are ill (or someone acting in their behalf) and through the direct participation of God."³ Defined in its narrowest sense, spiritual healing involves the kind of healing which takes place through prayer without the use of the known conventional medical and psychological methods and techniques. Although all healing comes from God, the phrase "spiritual healing" is usually reserved for the healing in which God seems to intervene directly in the human situation in a more manifest way.

In this dissertation this more narrow definition of spiritual healing is accepted, but it is assumed that spiritual and medical therapy are not exclusive of each other. Rather, they should unite

³ Edgar Sanford, God's Healing Power (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 2.

their efforts, each being ordained by God to implement His concern for the health and welfare of all people. If man was only a refined animal, he would probably not need religion or prayer for healing; a doctor would be his entire answer to health. Likewise, if man's faith and spiritual life were perfectly united with God, he would probably not need doctors. But as man exists at the present time he finds himself in need of both medicine and religion.

The intent of this dissertation is not to defend or prove the validity of spiritual healing. It is assumed that healing through spiritual methods such as prayer and meditation is real and valid. The main task in this discussion is to investigate the theological and psychological principles which are basic to spiritual healing. A final section of the dissertation will indicate how these principles may be used in the actual spiritual healing of sick persons.

Spiritual healing will be examined from a theological perspective, from a medical-psychological perspective, and finally from the perspective of a person working in the field of spiritual healing today. The primary resources used to represent these three perspectives are respectively Paul Tillich, Paul Tournier and Agnes Sanford. Although each of these authors deals with healing from a specific perspective, each of them in themselves represents a rather wholistic approach. In the concluding section of the dissertation, these perspectives will be brought together into some kind of an integrated approach.

In order to obtain a general framework for this discussion,

it will be helpful to present a capsule statement reflecting the approach of each of these representative resource persons. Tillich is concerned about the existential situation in which man finds himself. In this situation, man is separated from God, the very ground and meaning of his existence. This existential condition tends to pull the self into disintegration as man moves in many different directions seeking self-fulfillment. In terms of the present discussion this disintegration is called disease. This existential situation has been entered into and transcended by what Tillich calls the New Being manifested in Jesus as the Christ. Under the impact of the New Being, man experiences integration of self, which tends to produce healing.

Paul Tournier does not use the term "spiritual healing" as such, but instead uses the term "soul healing." He uses the term "soul" to refer to the spiritual, moral side of man in contrast to the chemical, mechanistic side. When man turns against the moral thrust within himself through different kinds of immorality, he suffers the consequences in the form of disease and various other kinds of ailments of his body and mind. Healing can take place as the person aligns his life with the purposeful, growth-striving thrust of his spirit, which is morally oriented according to the perfect image of God reflected in every person. In line with his emphasis on the spiritual side of man, Tournier promotes an approach to medicine which he calls "the medicine of the whole person."

According to Agnes Sanford, healing takes place when man

is properly functioning in accord with certain laws of the universe. There are many already existing spiritual laws which, if discovered and used properly, can produce healing. Through experimentation, man can learn these laws and put them to use. Healing is always potentially possible for Sanford because God always strives for man's good which includes health of body, mind and spirit. Healing then becomes a matter of man adjusting his patterns of thinking and living so as to be in tune with the already potential reality of healing.

The remainder of this dissertation will discuss spiritual healing in terms of these three perspectives. Throughout the dissertation an attempt will be made to arrive at an integrated theoretical and practical framework which can be used within the context of the healing ministry of the church.

CHAPTER II

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE NEW BEING TO HEALTH AND DISEASE

The writings of Paul Tillich are helpful in examining some of the theological issues involved in spiritual healing. His whole approach emphasizes the healing of the split between man and God which is accomplished through Jesus as the Christ, the bearer of the New Being, the one who has made manifest the new reality. In Tillich's system of theology, he examines the situation of man as he exists in his alienated and separated state. This separated state tends to pull the human being toward the condition called disease. He deals also with the state of reconciliation made possible through the New Being of Jesus as the Christ, a state of being which tends to produce a condition called health.

THE EXISTENTIAL CONDITION OF MAN

A definition of the term "exist" is essential to this discussion. The Latin term existere means "to stand out." To exist means to stand out of nothingness. Nothingness is defined in accord with the Greek distinction between ouk on (absolute non-being) and me on (relative non-being).¹ The term "exist"

¹Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), II, 20.

relates to both of these meanings. To exist means to stand out of absolute non-being in the sense that the existing thing can be found in the context of the reality man knows. In another sense, non-being implies potential being (relative non-being). Everything participates in potential being before it comes into actual being. Therefore, to exist can mean to stand out of potential being. But even as a thing becomes actual, it still stands in potential being. This situation occurs because the existing thing never completely pours its whole potential being into actual being.² Everything in some way is still becoming that which it potentially is. The term "essential being" can be used to describe this state of potential being. Here the term "essential" is used in the Platonic sense. For Plato, essence is true being or true reality. Existence is error or imperfection. To exist then means to stand out of true or perfect being. Man would have to rise above his existence in order to achieve the state of his essential being.

The story of Adam's Fall is symbolic of man's split from his essential being. Before the Fall, man was in a state of "dreaming innocence."³ The term "dreaming" is appropriate because it implies a state of realness and unrealness both at the same time. The non-realness that is experienced in dreaming is not totally different from the real world. The potential and the actual participate in each other in the state of dreaming. Likewise, the term "innocence" is appropriate in terms of its three connotations.⁴ First, it

²Ibid., II, 21. ³Ibid., II, 33. ⁴Ibid., II, 34.

implies a lack of actual experience. Second, it implies a lack of personal responsibility. Third, it implies a lack of moral guilt. This dreaming innocence is not meant to symbolize perfection, since only God is perfect in the sense that only God is above the essential-existential split. Dreaming innocence simply implies an ignorance of the existential situation. Through the Fall, man became a self-conscious creature aware of himself in the existential situation. Man is caught in the situation of wanting to maintain his dreaming innocence, while at the same time wanting to actualize his potential being. Man chose to actualize his potential being under the condition of existence and thus his potential being was distorted. He then lost his state of dreaming innocence.⁵ The loss of this dreaming innocence brought man face to face with his existential situation and produced anxiety and guilt, two terms which will be discussed later.

The term "estrangement" is also useful in describing man's condition. Man is estranged from his true essential being when he is not what he essentially is or ought to be.⁶ The term "estrangement" is helpful in clarifying the biblical term "sin," but cannot replace it. The word sin implies man's personal responsibility for his own estranged condition.⁷ Man's estranged condition is not just the given state of things, like the laws of nature, rather it is a matter of both personal freedom along with universal destiny.⁸

⁵ Ibid., II, 35. ⁶ Ibid., II, 45. ⁷ Ibid., II, 46. ⁸ Ibid.

Tillich defines three characteristics of man's estrangement.⁹

First, man is characterized by his unbelief. This unbelief does not mean just an unwillingness or inability to believe in the doctrines of the church. Rather, this unbelief is produced as man actualizes himself as a human being and turns toward himself and away from God. The very fact that man must search for God implies that he is estranged from Him. A second characteristic of estrangement is hubris. Hubris is man's attempt to elevate himself to the realm of the divine. Man desires to see himself as the center of the universe. He tries to equate himself with God. He will not admit his finitude. The third characteristic of estrangement is concupiscence. Concupiscence is the unlimited desire of man to draw the whole of reality into himself. Man desires infinite abundance, unlimited power, infinite wealth, all knowledge and unending pleasure. Freud's concept of the libido is relevant here. The libido symbolizes man's unlimited desire to release his biological, especially sexual, tensions in order to obtain pleasure.¹⁰ Nietzsche's concept of the "will to power" is also representative of this characteristic of concupiscence.

Each of the above manifestations of estrangement turns man away from God and away from his essential being as a man. Each expression of estrangement contradicts man's essential being. This self-contradiction drives man toward self-destruction.¹¹ Under the condition of estrangement, man is constantly fighting against himself. This situation is an expression of the fact that man has lost his

⁹Ibid., II, 47. ¹⁰Ibid., II, 53. ¹¹Ibid., II, 61.

center. Instead of coming together into some kind of a unified whole, the forces within man's personality pull at each other and split the person. People have often used the term "falling to pieces" to describe this feeling of disintegration. It is helpful to understand this disintegration process in terms of Tillich's discussion of the three ontological polarities which characterize human beings and come into conflict under the condition of estrangement. Under the condition of estrangement, these polarities are not in balance because man pushes himself in many different directions seeking release from his anxious situation.

The first polarity is that of freedom and destiny.¹² Within the context of essential being, freedom and destiny are in tension with each other, but not in conflict. In this state, man's freedom is moving him toward his destiny. But in the moment when man begins to assert himself and to actualize himself under the condition of hubris and concupiscence, man moves away from his destiny; he moves in many diverse directions as he asserts his freedom to actualize himself. Instead of allowing his eternal destiny to move him, man allows his inner compulsions and external causes to move him. The result of this situation is the further loss of man's center.

A second polarity involves the poles of dynamic and form.¹³ Within the context of man's essential nature, dynamic and form are united in a creative tension. The dynamic side of this polarity operates in this state as the given forms are always being transcended. But this transcendence always becomes manifest in terms of

¹²Ibid., II, 62.

¹³Ibid., II, 64.

new forms so that there is a unity of dynamic and form. But under the condition of hubris and concupiscence, man is constantly driving himself into all directions without any definite aim or purpose. Both form and dynamic lose their meaning in this kind of a situation. Man again loses his integrated center. He is constantly seeking change in terms of the new and the novel, but he is seeking change for change's sake alone with no concern for his purpose. Without form to give shape to man's seeking for the new, nothing of meaning can be created.

But form without dynamic is equally destructive.¹⁴ When form is separated from the dynamic that produced it, it becomes an external law with no creativity within it. The situation created is one of either complete oppression or else continuous rebellious outbreaks of dynamic forces leading to chaos. All the mechanistic theories of man fall under this category of form without dynamic. Many of these mechanistic theories reduce man to a system of logical, moral, aesthetic forms to which man feels he must conform. Creativity is squelched.

A third polarity involves the poles of individualization and participation.¹⁵ When the creative tension of this polarity is maintained, a being which is individualized is also able to participate in the world. He is free to be himself in participation with other beings who are free to be themselves. But under the condition of estrangement, man shuts himself up within himself, afraid to let

¹⁴Ibid. ¹⁵Ibid., II, 65.

anyone in for fear of disintegration. On the other hand, man allows himself to be so swallowed up by the mechanistic society in which he lives that he no longer has a self-identity except perhaps as a number in a computer. Again, the creative center of man becomes a blur with no chance for creativity.

As man continues to drive himself in all directions seeking some kind of fulfillment, his center becomes more and more nebulous. Man is faced with the possibility of non-being. He becomes vividly aware of his own finitude along with his ultimate fate, which is death. Man's futile search for fulfillment produces more, not less, anxiety. Tillich defines anxiety as "the state in which a being is aware of its possible non-being."¹⁶ It is helpful to distinguish between anxiety and fear. Fear, as opposed to anxiety, has a definite object which can be faced and dealt with in some kind of meaningful confrontation. Anxiety, on the other hand, has no object to encounter.¹⁷ There is no direction in which to go. The person is left in a state of limbo. This kind of anxiety is not the fear of death itself, rather it is the absolute unknowing about what comes after death.

Tillich refers to three types of anxiety in terms of how non-being threatens being.¹⁸ First, non-being threatens man's ontological self-affirmation, relatively in terms of the fate controlling life, and absolutely in terms of death. Second, it threatens man's

¹⁶Paul Tillich, The Courage to Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 35.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 36. ¹⁸Ibid., p. 41.

spiritual self-affirmation, relatively in terms of the emptiness of his life, and absolutely in terms of ultimate meaninglessness. Third, it threatens man's moral self-affirmation, relatively in terms of guilt, and absolutely in terms of ultimate condemnation leading to non-being.

These are forms of the existential anxiety which is inherent in man as he exists. But pathological anxiety is existential anxiety manifested under special conditions.¹⁹ Being which is acting with courage is being which takes the existential anxiety into itself and accepts it as part of its being. Being acting courageously can continue to exist in spite of the constant threat of non-being. Being which cannot accept this existential anxiety as its own and live with it is left with despair. Despair literally means "without hope." Despair is felt when a being becomes aware of itself as unable to affirm itself because of the constant threat of non-being.²⁰

Neurotic behavior is man's reaction to the constant threat of non-being.²¹ In attempting to avoid non-being, the neurotic also avoids being in some way. The neurotic must constantly suppress many parts of his being. By reducing the realm of his own potential being which he affirms, he thereby reduces the possibility of non-being along with its anxiety. But the price he pays is that he can live only a limited life with limited possibilities. The neurotic is much more sensitive to his own being and the threat of non-being than the "normal" personality. For this reason the neurotic may be

¹⁹Ibid., p. 65. ²⁰Ibid., p. 55. ²¹Ibid., p. 66.

inclined to have more creative moments than the normal person. But this sensitivity causes the neurotic to be continually hurt by the reality of existence. He is more sensitive to his estrangement than the normal person who has been able to go on actualizing himself in spite of his estrangement.

Because everything man does is an expression of his estranged condition, he can do nothing to save himself from his estrangement. Everything man does will be an expression of his own willful rebellion against God. In his letter to the Romans, Paul says that when man's mind is controlled by human nature (flesh), this situation can only lead to death.²² This is another way of saying that man in himself under the condition of estrangement can do nothing to bridge the gap between himself and God, the ground of his being.

Traditionally, man has tried to bridge that gap in several ways, trying to save himself.²³ The way of legalism has always been present in man's history. The law is a divine gift because it shows man his own essential nature; it shows man his true relationship to God, to other men and to himself. The problem is that the law must show forth this essential nature in terms of commandments because man is under the condition of estrangement. Man sees these laws as expressions of his essential being which he has lost, and then begins to try to actualize this essential being which he knows is within himself. But essential being cannot be commanded, because the very existence of these commandments distorts essential being, which must

²²Romans 8:6. ²³Tillich, Systematic Theology, II, 81.

be expressed from within man's being and not from without.

Asceticism is a second way in which man has tried to save himself. Here man tries to eliminate his unquenchable desire by removing as many objects of possible desire as he can within the context of his finite existence. But this method also fails because the desire is not really removed; it is merely repressed, often to come out in some other more distorted manner, such as fanaticism, domination and sado-masochistic or suicidal tendencies.

Sacramental, doctrinal and emotional ways of self-salvation have also failed. The sacraments in themselves are supposed to embody the divine presence in such a way that they become vehicles of grace, especially in the Roman Catholic Church. But the anxiety which inevitably arises as to whether or not the rite was performed correctly shows that the sacramental act is still existing under the condition of estrangement. The fear that union with the divine is not being obtained is always present in this estranged condition. The doctrinal self-salvation concept of "justification by faith," representative of Protestantism, is also a distortion of real union with God. Faith as the state of being grasped by the divine became distorted into believing in a particular doctrine. Faith then became dependent on an intellectual affirmation of a particular proposition. The question always arises, "Do I really believe and therefore am I really saved?" The doubt of union with God is always there. The emotional way of self-salvation stands between these two approaches. It usually demands a radical personal commitment

produced by some kind of a conversion experience. The biggest danger here is the attempt by an evangelist to provoke certain appropriate emotional responses. Certain legalistic requirements are also found in this particular way of self-salvation aimed at making one holier. But here man is not depending on the divine to sanctify him, but rather he is trying to sanctify himself by obeying a certain set of rules.

THE NEW BEING

Man has always been in search of a way to save himself from his own human predicament under the condition of estrangement. Tillich calls this search "the quest for the New Being."²⁴ This quest is universal because the human situation is universal. The history of religions has shown this quest to be of two types which are in polar relation to each other. The first type is represented in most of the Eastern religions. This first type is predominantly non-historical. The misery of mankind is not to be changed in any way, rather individuals may transcend the whole sphere of the existence of things, men and gods. The New Being is interpreted as the negation of all beings and the affirmation of the Ground of Being alone. In the Western religions the more historical type of quest is represented, in which the New Being is expected to be manifested within the historical process. The whole of reality is affirmed as essentially good although distorted by the influence of man's

²⁴Ibid., II, 86.

estrangement. In this type, the New Being is expected to transform reality into its essential being. In Christianity, the decisive event of the appearance of the New Being occurs in the very center of history; in fact, it is this event which gives history its center. Christianity emphasizes the present aspect of this transformation as well as the future aspect, which has not yet taken place. And, although the appearance of the New Being was a one-time event, the revelation of the New Being is a continuous process operating throughout the span of history. All of this is involved in the term "Christ" as used in Christianity.²⁵

The Christian assertion is that the New Being has appeared in Jesus as the Christ. This assertion represents a paradox.²⁶ To see its relationship to the Christian message, it is necessary to understand the definition of "paradox." "Paradox" literally means "that which contradicts opinion." In the case of the Christian message as a paradox, it contradicts all of ordinary human experience; it contradicts all of man's expectations. Kierkegaard used the term "offense" to describe Christ. The Christian message of the New Being is an offense against man's complete reliance on himself and his resources, against all attempts at self-salvation and against his resignation to despair.²⁷ The New Being appears both as a judgment against these attitudes of man as well as a promise involving a new kind of reality brought about through the New Being. This new reality cannot be logically understood; it is a matter of faith; i.e.,

²⁵ Ibid., II, 88.

²⁶ Ibid., II, 90.

²⁷ Ibid., II, 92.

being grasped by the divine.

An understanding of the concept of "Christ as Mediator" will also be helpful in this discussion of Christ as the New Being. In the history of religions, the term mediation has usually referred to making the divine manifest in a concrete manner. Many of the pagan gods had this function. In Christianity, the term "mediating" means bridging the gap between the infinite and the finite.²⁸ Jesus as the Christ does not appear as a third reality between God and man, rather he represents God to man. He shows man his essential being manifested within the existential situation. Christ as essential man represents God. The paradox of the Christian message is the fact that in one personal life, essential manhood has appeared under the conditions of estrangement without being conquered by those conditions.²⁹

The term "Incarnation" also needs some clarification. The popular phrase "God has become man" is not paradoxical, rather it is nonsensical. God as ultimate reality cannot cease to be God in order to be man. Theologians have tried to deal with this problem in the use of language by speaking of a divine being (e.g., Son of God) which has become man. The trouble with this kind of explanation is that it begins to have polytheistic connotations. The Johanne phrase, "the Logos became flesh," seems to represent the most accurate kind of statement describing the Incarnation. According to Tillich, the term flesh in this Johanne phrase is not used to

²⁸Ibid., II, 93. ²⁹Ibid., II, 94.

mean material substance, but rather it stands for historical existence.³⁰ God is manifested as savior within the context of estranged humanity which continually rejects Him.

The New Being breaks into the old reality of estrangement and transforms it.³¹ The New Being does not replace the old reality, but it transforms it into a new kind of reality. Tillich discusses three words which are related to this new kind of reality: reconciliation, reunion and resurrection. A brief description of these three words will be helpful.

Man in his existential condition is separated from God, the Ground of Being. Traditionally, this state of separation has been called sin. Man has always felt the need to be reconciled with the Ground of his being. He has tried to accomplish this reconciliation through rites and sacraments, prayers and services, by moral behavior and works of charity, and by all the futile attempts to overcome estrangement as we discussed above. But none of these attempts is ever enough, because the demand put upon man by God is infinite. Because man cannot meet the demand, he becomes hostile toward God.³² According to Tillich, this hostility comes out in two obvious manners. First, man exhibits hostility toward himself. This self-rejection often comes out as pride, arrogance, self-certainty and complacency. Man tries to make himself acceptable to his own standard of judgment, but he continually fails and thus becomes

³⁰ Ibid., II, 95. ³¹ Paul Tillich, The New Being, p. 20.

³² Ibid.

more hostile and rejecting toward himself. This self-rejection also becomes projected on to other people, and thus man exhibits a hostility toward others. Only reconciliation with God can break this cycle of hostility. This reconciliation takes place through the New Being which has broken into man's old reality through Jesus as the Christ.

The process of reunion is also involved in this new reality. The fact that man is separated from his essential being has already been discussed. But in the figure of Jesus as the Christ, a human life is seen that maintained union with his essential being in spite of everything that tried to drive him toward separation.³³ Christ became the mediator of the New Being because his life mediated the power of an undisrupted union. Through participation in the New Being mediated through Christ, man is united with his ground and meaning. He is connected with his ultimate destiny. Man feels accepted, by himself, by others and by God. All healing is represented in this reunion with oneself.

Finally, the New Being means resurrection.³⁴ This resurrection is the victory of the new state of things, accomplished through Christ, over the old state of things. The New Being is born out of the death of the old. Out of the disintegration and separation of the old reality something new and eternal is born. Man becomes a new creature in Christ, as Paul puts it.³⁵

³³ Ibid., p. 22.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

³⁵ II Cor. 5:17.

There are two characteristics of Jesus which make him the Christ or the bearer of the New Being.³⁶ First, he maintained a constant union with God, the Ground of his being. He was united with his essential being. Second, he sacrificed everything he could have gained for himself from this unity. This sacrifice is seen first in the temptation story and finally on the cross. Because of his unity with God and his continual sacrifice of all finite gain, Jesus remained transparent to the divine. Because of this transparency, he was accepted by others as God himself. It was his reception by others that made him the Christ, the bearer of the New Being.³⁷ It is the very being of Jesus as the Christ that made him the bearer of the New Being. It was not his words, not his deeds or his suffering that made him the Christ. All these things are expressions of the New Being.

There has always been the temptation to obtain New Being by copying the outward characteristics of Jesus. Persons within the Christian tradition have often tried to transform their own lives to become Christ-like. But as was said above, these concrete traits of Jesus are meant to be transparent in order to manifest the New Being. They are to point beyond themselves; they are not things in themselves to be imitated.³⁸ Man is not asked to copy something outside of himself. He is asked to participate in the New Being and to be transformed by it, but within the concreteness of his own life.

³⁶ Tillich, Systematic Theology, I, 135.

³⁷ Ibid., II, 97. ³⁸ Ibid., II, 122.

The New Being's entry into the human situation relates specifically to the topic of healing. A discussion of the concept of salvation is involved in the whole area of healing. The original meaning of "salvation" is healing (from salvis, which means "healed").³⁹ It has been stated that man's state of existence is characterized by separation from his ground or meaning; man is dis-integrated; he has lost his center of being. In this context, healing means the reuniting of that which is estranged, giving a center to that which is split. This healing is an overcoming of the split between man and God, between man and his world (including other people) and between man and himself. Salvation as healing means reclaiming man from the old state of things and transferring him into the new state of things created by the New Being.⁴⁰

Tillich refers to the threefold character of salvation.⁴¹ First, salvation is dependent on man's participation in the New Being as manifested in Jesus as the Christ. The term "participation" is used in the sense that the New Being grasps the person who is still in bondage to the old state of things. Being grasped and drawn into New Being is described by Paul as being "in Christ." The traditional terms for this new state are "New Birth," "Regeneration," and "being a new creature." This state of regeneration involves first an objective state of things accomplished by Jesus as the Christ as the bearer of the New Being. Subjective results follow this objective state of things, but the subjective results are always fragmentary

³⁹ Ibid., II, 166. ⁴⁰ Ibid. ⁴¹ Ibid., II, 176.

and ambiguous and are thus not reliable criteria for claiming or disclaiming participation in Christ. The only acceptable criterion is faith which accepts Jesus the Christ as the bearer of the New Being.

A second characteristic of salvation is being objectively accepted by God and subjectively accepting this acceptance. Traditionally, this characteristic of salvation has been called justification. Paul and Luther were both fond of the phrase, "justification by faith." On first sight, this statement appears to involve something man does--e.g., have faith. But throughout this discussion so far faith has been defined as being grasped by the divine. Faith happens in man; it is not just a human act. In the objective sense, justification is the eternal act of God by which He accepts as not estranged those who are indeed estranged from Him. Through this act He takes man into unity with Himself.⁴² But there is also the subjective side of justification in which man must accept God's acceptance of him in order for that acceptance to be relevant to his life. This experience of acceptance must involve both the intellectual and the emotional aspects of man. Again, it is the power of the New Being that allows man to participate in this kind of acceptance.

Finally, salvation is seen as transformation by the New Being, traditionally called sanctification. According to Tillich, "Sanctification is the process in which the power of the New Being

⁴²Ibid., II, 178.

transforms personality and community, inside and outside of the church."⁴³ This transforming process accomplished through the New Being is the actual healing process as experienced subjectively.

THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE

The Holy Spirit and its effect on the human being is also relevant to the topic of healing. In order to understand the effect of the Holy Spirit on man, the concept of the self and its centeredness needs further clarification. The process of life involves a movement outward from the centered self and then a returning to the center of the self. Tillich refers to a threefold process in describing the self's experience of its world.⁴⁴ The first aspect of this process is the fact that the self is centered; there is an identity of the self which is the reference point of all its experiences. Without this center, the self would have no unifying purpose around which to organize its experiences. The second part of this life process takes place as the self reaches out and interacts with its environment. This stage of the process is called self-alteration. The self is affected and altered by the environment in which it lives. In the third part of this process, the self returns to its center and thus assimilates some part of the environment into itself. This assimilated part of the environment becomes integrated with the whole unity of the self when this process is

⁴³Ibid., II, 179.

⁴⁴Ibid., III, 30.

operating ideally. Through this process, the self is constantly seeking to transcend itself, always reaching out for the new, but at the same time trying to assimilate the new into the context of its total meaning as a centered self. There is an inherent unity in this life process, but this unity is constantly threatened by the existential situation of estrangement which tends to drive life in one particular direction or another, causing the self to become imbalanced in this flowing out and flowing in process. Many diseases can be understood as an organism's unwillingness to return to its self-identity.⁴⁵ In the condition of disease the self has not been able to either eject a strange element or assimilate it into unity with itself.

The Spiritual Presence, Tillich's term for the Holy Spirit, has an effect on the life process just described. In discussing this effect, the word "spirit" needs to be defined. The root meaning of the word "spirit" is "breath." Ancient man observed that where there was breath there was power of life, and when the breath vanished, the power of life also vanished. But, in Tillich's words, spirit as the power of life "is not identical with the inorganic sub-stratum which is animated by it; rather, spirit is the power of animation itself and not a part added to the organic system."⁴⁶ Spirit is the unity of the power of being and the meaning of being. Tillich says, "Spirit can be defined as the actualization of power and meaning in unity."⁴⁷ Because man experiences spirit as the life

⁴⁵Ibid., III, 35. ⁴⁶Ibid., III, 21. ⁴⁷Ibid., III, 111.

dimension which gives his life power and meaning, he is able to talk about God symbolically as Spirit (with a capital "S") as the ultimate power and meaning of his life.

There has always existed the question concerning the relationship between Spirit and spirit. Traditionally, the relation has been seen as the divine Spirit dwelling and working in the human spirit.⁴⁸ As the human spirit is grasped by the divine Spirit, the human spirit is driven out of itself. Through this grasping process, the self is pulled toward transcendence. In this state, the human spirit does not cease being human spirit. Rather, it is brought into a new kind of awareness in which it sees itself and all of its experiences in relation to the Spirit of God. The term "ecstasy" has traditionally been used to describe this state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence. In the state of ecstasy, the center of the self is not destroyed. Such destruction would be demonic possession rather than participation in the creative Spiritual Presence. Through this grasping process, the self is united with its essential being which is the divine Ground of Being, but at the same time, the self is able to maintain its uniqueness as a centered self.

There is always the danger of the ecstatic moment degenerating into chaos as the human spirit is grasped and shaken and lifted in participation with the Spiritual Presence. Many movements today which emphasize the ecstatic are often in danger of falling into complete chaotic emotionalism. In I Corinthians 12-14 Paul warns

⁴⁸ Ibid.

against the wrong use of the spiritual gifts, especially when they produce chaos. But, on the other hand, religion without the ecstatic becomes mere ritualism and intellectualism devoid of power. The church is in the precarious position of maintaining the balance between these two extremes.

It has been said that man is in an ambiguous state in which his essential and his existential being are at the same time in separation and in interaction. The function of the Spiritual Presence is to create unambiguous life. This creation of unambiguous life would bring about the manifestation of the essential within the existential situation of man so that his actual being would be a true expression of his potential being. This reunion becomes possible as the self transcends itself while maintaining its centeredness under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. This condition has been discussed in terms of the ecstatic moment. This condition exists only fragmentarily within the limits of finite existence, but the possibility of such moments of ecstasy is quite real.

In order to more fully understand the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the human being, the words "faith" and "love" need to be defined and discussed more explicitly. According to Tillich's definition, "faith is the state of being grasped by the transcendent unity of unambiguous life--it embodies love as the state of being taken into that transcendent unity."⁴⁹ Faith has been greatly distorted in the English language. Often faith is defined as a

⁴⁹Ibid., III, 129.

a belief in something for which there is no real evidence; it often means believing in something absurd. But as it has already been emphasized, faith is being grasped by the divine, by the New Being as manifested in Jesus as the Christ.⁵⁰

Faith cannot be identified with any particular emotion or with any particular rational assertion. These are contained in the stance of faith, but they are not identical with it. Faith cannot be identified with any particular mental function nor can it be derived or produced by any of these functions. Rather, faith is being grasped by the Spiritual Presence in such a way that the self sees all of itself in relation to the Spiritual Presence of the divine. In this state of being grasped, the self subjects its entire being to the transforming power of the Spiritual Presence.⁵¹ This idea of faith reaffirms the fact that there is nothing man can do within his own functions to unite himself with the Ground of himself, his essential being. Only the Spiritual Presence can raise all the functions of man to the transcendent level of union with the ultimate. But faith on a subjective level is the acceptance of being accepted into transcendent unity with the ultimate in the Spiritual Presence. This subjective acceptance of acceptance is necessary for transcendent unity to take place. The subjective and the objective sides of this acceptance have been previously discussed under the topic of justification.

Love, like faith, must also be purged of some of its distorted

⁵⁰Ibid., III, 131. ⁵¹Ibid., III, 133.

definitions. Love has often been identified only with the sentimental or emotional character of man. Love in this sense becomes nebulous and difficult to define. Love, according to Tillich's definition, is "the drive toward the reunion of the separated."⁵² Just as the Spiritual Presence is the creator of faith, it is also the creator of unambiguous love, commonly labeled agape. Like faith, love cannot be identified with any one particular mental function, be it rational or emotional. Love is the participation of the whole centered being in the process of reunion. But love does contain emotional and rational elements. There is an emotional, driving element about love which causes it to long for reunion with that from which it is separated. Love without this emotional element is only good will toward somebody or something.⁵³ There is also a rational, volitional element of love which manifests itself in the deliberate will to be united with another being. Without this deliberate will to be united, the force of emotion could never penetrate through the wall of separation.

Agape has three definite qualities as described by Tillich.⁵⁴ First, there is a quality of complete acceptance of the object of love without any restrictions or conditions. Second, agape holds fast to its acceptance of the object of love in spite of the estranged and demonic elements manifested by the object of love. Nothing the object of love does can stop agape's acceptance. Third, agape fully expects the re-establishment of holiness, greatness and dignity in the object of love. Agape is the attitude which allows the object of love to

⁵²Ibid., III, 134. ⁵³Ibid., III, 136. ⁵⁴Ibid., III, 138.

come into transcendent unity, thus creating unambiguous life. This description of agape is related more to God than to man. Through this kind of love God brings man into unity with himself, thus creating unambiguous life, allowing for the unity of existential and essential being. None of the above elements of agape are seen in man's love for God.⁵⁵ But man's love for God can be seen in his longing and drive toward union with God. Being grasped by God creates a longing and drive in man to adhere to Him in love. The grasping and the adhering become one process. Love then can be seen as the dynamic channel through which healing of all kinds can take place. Through love man is united with the perfect image of God which is contained within him. This unity produces wholeness which is salvation as experienced in the present.

In terms of how the Spiritual Presence relates to the human-situation, it will be helpful to discuss how spiritual healing relates to the other methods of healing. The life process of self-identity and self-alteration has been discussed. Disintegration results if either of these polarities becomes so predominant that the whole life process is thrown out of balance. An organism can become so isolated within itself that it fails to interact with its environment. Disease results when the organism fails to assimilate needed elements from its environment. Disease can also result when the organism tries to take elements into itself which it cannot assimilate. Its unity is thus destroyed and disease occurs. The disintegration resulting in either

⁵⁵Ibid.

of these conditions of disease ultimately results in death.⁵⁶ The forces of healing are aimed at breaking the predominance of one of the polarities, while reviving the influence of the other polarity. Since the organism of man is multidimensional (biological, psychological, spiritual), healing cannot be directed at just one dimension. The whole of life is involved in both health and disease. Therefore, any one-sided approach to healing will be inadequate. A discussion of the popular phrase "faith healing" will be helpful in attempting to see the relationship of spiritual healing to the other methods of healing.

Faith is the creation of the Spiritual Presence. Thus, faith healing could simply mean healing under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. But the phrase "faith healing" as it is popularly used seems to refer more to a "magic" kind of healing. Tillich defines magic as "the impact of one being upon another which does not work through mental communication or physical causation but nevertheless has physical or mental effects."⁵⁷ Magic is dependent on a special kind of interrelation between finite powers. It is based on the "belief in a sympathetic interdependence of all parts of the universe."⁵⁸ The word "magic" is not used in a pejorative sense because there is an element of magic involved in all forms of healing.⁵⁹ But there is a distinction between "magic healing" or "faith healing" and the kind of integration or health produced under the impact of the Spiritual

⁵⁶ Ibid., III, 277.

⁵⁷ Ibid., III, 270.

⁵⁸ Paul Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health," in Religion and Health (New York: Association Press, 1958), p. 17.

⁵⁹ Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 279.

Presence. Tillich presents three ideas in this regard which are relevant to this discussion.⁶⁰ First, this kind of faith healing is not usually "healing through faith" as faith has been defined in accord with Tillich; i.e., in terms of being grasped by the divine. Rather, this kind of healing is accomplished through magic concentration in hopes of having an effect on the object of concentration. Second, faith healing is justified as an element in many human encounters, although it can have destructive as well as creative possibilities. Third, if faith healing excludes other means of healing, it is predominantly destructive.

In regard to spiritual healing there is the possibility of what Tillich calls "Spirit-determined prayer."⁶¹ This kind of prayer is primarily concerned with bringing one's own personal center, including one's concern for his health or that of another, before God. Healing in this sense is "being made whole in relation to the ultimate ground and meaning of our existence."⁶² The integration of the personal center of the self is possible only under the impact of the Spiritual Presence. Within the ambiguous, fragmentary conditions of existence, this kind of integration may or may not have actual effects on the body and mind of a person. Magic healing, on the other hand, has for its primary concern its desired aim of bodily or mental healing and not reunion with God. Magic healing seems to imply a manipulative process whereby the divine is used for the specific aims

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Tillich, "The Relation of Religion and Health," p. 22.

of the one praying the healing prayer. Spirit-determined prayer is more of a receptive kind of prayer in which the person praying is placing himself in the grasp of the divine so that the perfect will of God can be realized in his life.

It can be concluded from the preceding discussion that the Spirit is not some intoxicating substance that fills up a person like liquid, nor is it a stimulus for psychological excitement.⁶³ As the term Spiritual Presence implies, the Spirit is a presence. It is present and participating in the whole of a person's being. It is not a cause among other causes. The Spiritual Presence does observably affect the actual life of a person, but this affecting is of a rather indirect nature.⁶⁴ The Spiritual Presence, in accord with the previous definition of Spirit, is the all-encompassing unity of power and meaning in relationship to human beings. The spirit of man, his power and meaning, is brought into transcendent unity with the Spiritual Presence under its impact. Since finite being is multidimensional, with all of the dimensions participating in each other, the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the human spirit will affect all the dimensions of a person's life.⁶⁵ This process is not seen as a chain reaction starting with the impact of the Spiritual Presence on the human spirit and then causing change in the other dimensions of life. It has been said that the Spiritual Presence is participating presence in unity with the human spirit. Since man is multidimensional with all dimensions participating with each other, the

⁶³Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 275.

⁶⁴Ibid., III, 276.

⁶⁵Ibid.

presence of the Spiritual Presence in the human spirit means participation and presence in the other dimensions as well. As was already stated, the impact of the Spiritual Presence on man happens in a fragmentary and limited manner under the conditions of existence. Therefore, actual transformation is incomplete and imperfect. There is a sense of waiting for complete transformation in hope and anticipation. Nevertheless, even though the impact of the Spiritual Presence is fragmentary and incomplete, there are limited signs of real transformation, especially in the area of healing.⁶⁶ Some of the actual manifestations of this healing impact of the Spirit will be seen in the proceeding chapters as the discussion moves from these theological considerations to the more practical matters of health and disease as man experiences them in his daily existence.

⁶⁶Ibid., III, 277.

CHAPTER III

A MEDICINE OF THE WHOLE PERSON

Thus far, health and disease have been discussed from a theological perspective; these terms will now be examined from the standpoint of a medical-psychological approach. One of the forerunners in studying the relationship between emotions and health is Paul Tournier. As a physician and psychiatrist, Tournier has had the opportunity of examining some of the psychosomatic relationships involved in illness. He has also been interested in the influence of religion in a person's life. Most of his books written in this area of concern were published in the 1940's and 1950's in Switzerland. These books have been translated into English only within the last several years. His earliest works were far ahead of his time and were therefore not very well accepted by most people in the medical profession. Today, his books are quite valuable in regard to healing because psychosomatic medicine has now become quite acceptable within the medical profession. Much of the discussion in this chapter will be based on Tournier's work.

A MEDICAL-SPIRITUAL SYNTHESIS

Tournier states a truth that struck him early in his medical

work which pretty well summarizes the contents of this chapter. He says, "All men are struggling more or less consciously, and more or less secretly, with personal problems which have a considerable influence on their health--conflicts, rebellions, negative attitudes, moral failings and spiritual anxieties."¹ During his work as a medical doctor, Tournier has observed that there are specific relationships between certain complexes of attitudes and emotions and particular diseases. Out of these observations, he has developed an approach to medicine which he calls the medicine de la personne.² This approach encompasses psychosomatic medicine, but it also goes far beyond it in scope. Psychosomatic medicine is strictly an objective discipline, using only the methods of the natural sciences. Tournier's "medicine of the person" takes into account elements which are found only through the moral sciences--elements such as hopes, fears, aspirations and the like. Factors like these cannot be examined in any scientific manner. Often the doctor must rely on his own intuition as his only diagnostic tool.

Tournier takes a double-view approach to the make-up of man. On the one hand, man can be defined as a complex of physical, chemical and psychical phenomena--this is the concern of the natural sciences. On the other hand, man can be defined in terms of his behavior as a free, responsible, moral spiritual being--this is the concern of the

¹Paul Tournier, The Healing of Persons (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. XII.

²Ibid.

moral sciences.³ It will be helpful to examine this dualistic model of man in more detail.

The concept of causality is important in understanding this dual model of man. From the scientific, technical, objective perspective, man appears to be completely determined in his physical and psychical constitution and evolution by an immediate and absolute causality. Theoretically, by means of analysis, the origin of any idea, feeling or action can be understood by going back to the immediate ideas, feelings and actions which preceded this particular state. By means of scientific analysis, the scientist reduces life to a collection of physiological reactions which have nothing significantly meaningful about them.⁴ Thus, the scientist can give no definition of the overall meaning of life, other than a series of cause and effect relationships. Science can describe some of the links between the immediate cause and effect relationships which have governed every change in the evolutionary process, but it is unable to explain the process of evolution itself and why it moves in a definite direction in obedience to a definite plan.

Alongside of this immediate scientific causality, there is another independent transcendent causality.⁵ There is an overall plan governing the relationships of the individual phenomenon and imparting to each of them a significance within the evolutionary process so that they all move together toward the fulfillment of the destiny of the

³Paul Tournier, The Person Reborn (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 22.

⁴Ibid., p. 26.

⁵Ibid.

world. The thinking process of the human being is an illustration of this process. For example, a person could not think about a particular subject as he does at a particular moment if he had not read certain books or heard certain speakers or undergone particular psycho-chemical actions and reactions within the cells of his brain. Even his presently held religious convictions are determined through different experiences and exposures he has had in his past. But from the spiritual, transcendental perspective, the linking of these different phenomena is seen as the working out of his own spiritual destiny. Everything that has influenced him in his life up until this particular point in time has been part of a meaningful scheme enabling him to be at this particular point for a definite reason in terms of an overall plan. Each specific event then can be described in scientific, deterministic terms, but each event, along with the whole succession of events, is given meaning because of an all-encompassing spiritual plan being worked out in the person's life and in the totality of all life.

Both the moral, spiritual approach and the mechanistic, scientific approach are valid, but some kind of a synthesis of these two approaches is necessary. Each approach by itself represents a true, but rather incomplete, picture of man.⁶ In terms of health and disease, this synthesis would mean continuing to examine physical, objective causes of disease, but it would also mean examining each disease in terms of its meaning for the total life of the person. This latter approach to disease will be discussed in more detail below.

⁶Ibid., p. 22.

A discussion will be helpful concerning the relationship between psychoanalysis and spiritual healing or, to use Tournier's phrase, "soul healing."⁷ These two approaches to healing are inter-dependent. Each method must put forth checks and restraints on the other. Two concepts from Tournier's work illustrate how these two approaches are related.

First, it must be seen that psychological factors are involved in religious belief. The psychological fact which says that a child's initial image of God is largely determined by the mental picture he has of his own earthly father is significant.⁸ At first, the child sees his father as a kind of god. He sees him as being omnipotent, omniscient and perfect. As the child grows and sees that his father is not perfect, the child transfers these qualities to his image of God. This results in the constant doubt which every religious believer feels. There is the constant fear that God, like his own father, might let him down. A person who in childhood has suffered brutality, hostility or authoritarianism by his father may find it difficult to believe in the love, providence and forgiveness of the Heavenly Father. Telling this kind of a person to pray to a loving Father causes him to come to an obstacle which he cannot overcome. He may begin to consider himself to be a great sinner because he cannot pray. He may feel rejected by God. It will probably take the methods of psychoanalysis to unravel all of these mental projections which are blocking the person from having a healthy relationship with God. In

⁷Ibid., p. 15.

⁸Ibid.

this kind of a situation, a religious healer with his religious language may just further increase the rebellion and the feelings of inferiority being experienced by this particular individual.

A second concept from Tournier's work involves the fact that through the law of free association any thought, no matter how outrageous or shocking, may at any time come into the mind of a person as a result of an association with some quite ordinary idea.⁹ Unless a person pays particular attention, he usually scarcely notices these associative ideas as they constantly flow through the stream of consciousness. A sincere religious believer, however, lacking proper psychological instruction and clinging to the idea of moral perfection, may become quite disturbed to find such foreign thoughts coming into his mind. He may begin to feel dirty and shameful. His full attention may become focused on these intruding thoughts to the point where he becomes obsessed with these ideas and with his own guilt feelings for entertaining such thoughts. In this situation then, a sincere religious believer becomes obsessed with a moral problem, produced entirely out of free association, which probably has no real content in itself. If this kind of process is allowed to go on unchecked, it could result in serious mental imbalance.

Within the context of spiritual healing exercised without proper consideration of psychological factors, a few other detrimental effects can be observed, effects often produced by a spiritual healer lacking psychological knowledge. Alice Ikin, another prominent figure

⁹Ibid., p. 16.

in the area of psychotherapy and spiritual healing, discusses cases in which the work of a spiritual healer actually caused psychological damage.¹⁰ She says that a well-meaning spiritual healer may aggravate a person's psychological condition through the use of religious methods and religious language. After many spiritual healing missions in which many genuine healings have taken place, there is often a great emotional effect which lingers on after the conclusion of the mission.¹¹ Furthermore, doctors usually see only the casualties of these missions in their offices and not the people cured; therefore, they tend to mistrust the whole spiritual healing emphasis. Often the religiously-minded increase this sense of mistrust by putting forth the attitude of "We have the Spirit of God working through us!" They often ignore the fact that God also works through medical doctors and psychologists. The serious spiritual healer must be aware of some of the psychological factors if he is to successfully help people. For example, a well-meaning spiritual healer may lay his hands upon a person and pray for the removal of a particular symptom. A dramatic healing may even occur, but the emotional problem which produced the symptom may still be present and manifest itself in the person in some other way.

There is also the need for the spiritual healer to take some responsibility for the treatment and the effect of his methods of healing on the person with whom he prays.¹² A doctor is required to

¹⁰Alice Graham Ikin, New Concepts of Healing (New York: Association Press, 1956), p. 26.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., p. 29.

take this kind of responsibility for his patients. But a spiritual healer can pray with a person and then never see him again or follow up on the person's progress. This responsibility also involves knowing which healing method is appropriate in any given situation. Such methods as confession, absolution and the use of sacraments are all very useful tools when used appropriately, but each of these methods can become quite dangerous to mental health if they are used ill-advisedly.¹³ An appeal to a priest for confession and absolution may represent a way for a person to escape from facing up to a particular emotional problem which needs to be worked through. Often a person may confess a particular sin and be absolved, but still be blind to that which led him astray in the first place. In light of all these cautions, the person who desires to seriously engage in spiritual healing must constantly be alert to the many psychological factors that are involved in his work with people. But on the other hand, these warnings are not intended to squelch the work of real spiritual healing which is taking place through various people today.

It has been said that spiritual healing can often produce negative results when the psychological factors are ignored. But there is also another side of this issue. An adherence to strictly psycho-analytical techniques with no regard for the spiritual dimension can also produce devastating results. The effects of this kind of one-sided approach is illustrated in a case history from Tournier's work

¹³ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁴ Tournier, The Person Reborn, p. 17.

involving a young woman who had undergone psychoanalysis and who shortly afterwards experienced a sudden religious conversion.¹⁴ For a while her psychological life followed a normal course. But her involvement in the psychoanalytical process had produced a habit in her of constant self-examination. This kind of introspection became even stronger when she was faced with difficulties. She soon became obsessed with the idea of all the dark forces which she felt moving like powerful monsters deep within herself. She tried in vain to rid herself of such thoughts. The problem was even worse from her perspective because she had just learned to turn all matters of conscience over to God. If she had really done this, she could not understand why she was still plagued by all of these dark forces. In his counseling with this woman, Tournier told her that Christ was the Lord of her unconscious as well as her conscious self. He encouraged her to surrender this unconscious part of herself in prayer. This kind of spiritual counsel relieved the woman's anxiety and restored her peace of mind.

It can be concluded from this kind of an illustration that psychoanalytical methods are useful in helping a person confront the darker side of his personality. But, if a person is then left alone to deal with these new revelations of his darker side, he may become obsessed with it as has been illustrated. Furthermore, a person can never uncover all that exists within the unconscious mind. An affirmative faith in God's keeping of these hidden areas may be the only liberating factor capable of releasing a person from the kind of

¹⁴Tournier, The Person Reborn, p. 17.

obsession under discussion. The techniques of psychoanalysis are morally neutral in themselves.¹⁵ Taking into account the spiritual dimension of the person's life provides the therapist with an overall perspective in which the different psychoanalytical techniques may be applied. Both the spiritual and the psychoanalytical approaches must join together in order to complement each other instead of battling with each other as has been the case in the past.

Medicine has always emphasized the material causes of illness because these kinds of causes lend themselves more readily to analytical study and scientific experimentation.¹⁶ But the intuition of the doctor is an equally valid source of knowledge in regards to the patient's illness. One example of the limited knowledge attained by relying solely on the physiological model of medicine is the fact that this model cannot account for several patients suffering different diseases arising out of the same cause. Tournier cites the example of several alcoholics, all subject basically to the same kind of intoxication.¹⁷ Out of this group of alcoholics, one will end up with dropsy and cirrhosis of the liver, another will become mentally disintegrated after one or more attacks of delirium tremens, and a third will succumb to pulmonary tuberculosis. Tournier's approach involving the whole person would take into consideration the different personality types and the different moral problems in accounting for these different diseases being manifested in relationship to a common cause.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁶ Tournier, The Healing of Persons, p. 126.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

Recent studies in psychosomatic medicine support these kinds of observations. For example, certain studies in endocrinology have shown that there are definite connections between psychological tendencies and the secretion of the ductless glands.¹⁸ These kinds of studies present positive scientific evidence supporting the relationship between psychological factors and physiological manifestations.

Another medical doctor, Goothard Booth, has also made some helpful contributions in regard to this medical synthesis. Booth says that science, in its investigation of any phenomenon, relies on two basic criteria. First, the phenomenon must occur often enough to be statistically significant. Second, the occurrence of this phenomenon must be able to be repeated experimentally under laboratory conditions.¹⁹ In terms of these two criteria, the results obtained in the area of spiritual healing cannot be expected to be recognized on the same basis as other scientific knowledge. The phenomena which do occur under the heading of spiritual healing do not occur often enough to satisfy statisticians and they cannot be repeated deliberately under laboratory conditions.²⁰

There is some evidence from the physical sciences which supports spiritual healing. An understanding of the composition of matter itself is relevant in this regard. Matter appears to be quite solid as seen by man's naked eye. But scientists have discovered that this

¹⁸Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁹Goothard Booth, "Science and Spiritual Healing," in Healing: Human and Divine (New York: Association Press, 1957), p. 217.

²⁰Ibid.

solid appearance is merely an illusion of the sense organs. The space occupied by an electron in any given moment is less than a billionth part of the most solid object.²¹ From this perspective, the material part of the human body could be contained in the space occupied by a droplet of water. There is no rigid pattern of behavior of electrons as previously thought. Rather, the electrons behave in an unpredictable manner. Only when there exist large numbers of atoms in relationship to each other do we find regular behavior patterns. It is conceivable then that any solid object could suddenly disintegrate if exposed to the appropriate force. From this perspective, the miraculous disappearance of a cancer, for example, is scientifically conceivable, although the majority of medical cases show that the cancer grows until it destroys the organism. But there have been so-called "spontaneous cures" of cancer which defy medical explanation, although these cases have not been fully researched.²³

This kind of evidence suggests that spiritual healing can appropriately fit into the general concept developed by psychosomatic medicine; i.e., that bodily diseases express specific psychological conditions of the person and that these diseases disappear if the underlying condition producing the disease has disappeared either spontaneously or by treatment.²⁴ In regard to tuberculosis, for example, there are many factors involved other than just the Koch bacillus, which is the bacterial cause of tuberculosis. These other

²¹Ibid., p. 218.

²³Ibid., p. 220.

²²Ibid., p. 219.

²⁴Ibid.

factors are often less obvious. They may include disposition, emotional relationships and socio-economic status.²⁵ The influence of these kinds of factors will be discussed in more detail below.

There are also other kinds of medical cases that imply the connection between the physical and the spiritual. There have been cases, for example, in which persons have died unexpectedly even when the medical conditions made the prognosis favorable. Likewise, many seemingly hopeless cases have recovered against all scientifically established odds. In light of these kinds of findings, it would seem that the medical profession must begin to see the spiritual condition of the patient as an authentic consideration in treatment.²⁶ Recognition of spiritual healing does not make the medical methods obsolete by any means. Physics, biology and psychology are all part of the divine creation. A miraculous cure produced through spiritual healing techniques may appear as more of a direct expression of the relationship between God and man, but this relationship is not outside of the scientific endeavor when it is considered that the true meaning of the word "science" is "knowledge."²⁷ More research into spiritual healing is needed in order to attain more knowledge in regard to the meaning of illness and health.

²⁵Ibid., p. 225.

²⁶Ibid., p. 226.

²⁷Ibid., p. 227.

ILLNESS AND THE WHOLE PERSON

It has been seen that the relationship between illness and the moral, personal life of the individual is important in Tournier's approach to medicine. Tournier says that he has seen many people in search of some wonder-working drug which will cure them without their having to change or disrupt their life styles too much.²⁸ Often a person wants relief from the consequences of his moral faults, rather than having to undertake some reformation of his life. But as was said in the context of Tournier's approach involving the whole person, the moral and physical sides of man are related. In order for any permanent kind of healing to take place in one part of the person--e.g., the physical body--the whole person must undergo some kind of healing or transformation. It is a fact that illness does not come on a person suddenly. Rather, an illness is prepared for over a period of years.²⁹ This preparation involves factors such as faulty diet, over-indulgence in food and alcohol, overwork, moral conflicts and a host of other factors which Tournier calls "personal problems." The condition of the person, which may have developed over a period of time, is usually the determining factor involved in whether or not a person is overcome by a particular disease at any given time. The "terrain theory" of medicine is significant in regard to the condition of the person.³⁰ According to this theory, a microbe entering an organism

²⁸Tournier, The Healing of Persons, p. 5. ²⁹Ibid. ³⁰Ibid.

develops only insofar as it finds favorable (weakened) terrain. The resistance of the organism is the prime factor here. Man's moral life is very much involved in this resistance. In this regard, Tournier says that technical progress "can't of itself safeguard health if men by wrong modes of life compromise their power of resistance."³¹

Doctors are now beginning to see that particular diseases acquired by a person can tell a lot about that person's personality. Booth says, "The body speaks a very basic and a very honest language through the healthy and unhealthy functioning of its organs."³² This language involves observable indicators such as the color of the skin, the behavior of the heart and bowels, the functioning of the lungs, etc. A lie detector test, for example, is based on the honesty of the body's language. There is also evidence now that indicates that the organs of the body don't primarily strive for self-preservation as many have thought in the past. Booth says, "Under normal circumstances all organisms, not only man, feed and fight in their characteristic ways as expressions of living, not in order to keep their own body alive as an end in itself."³³ In line with this statement then, every manifestation of illness or health is some kind of symbolic expression of the whole organism. Illness becomes just another expression of the person. Again in this regard, Booth says:

³¹Ibid., p. 11.

³²Goothard Booth, "The Voice of the Body," in The Voice of Illness (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), p. 7.

³³Ibid.

Illness differs from health only with respect to the form in which the individual relates to his specific environment. Whereas healthy behavior patterns use the body organs, social conventions, and language in a manner which establishes and maintains positive interaction with others, the symptoms of illness serve only as self-expression.³⁴

A doctor then has the task of not only curing the specific illness or disease, but he must also help the patient interpret what this particular body expression is saying within the context of this person's total personality. It seems to be a rule that, if the needs of the personality are frustrated in some way and not expressed in realistic healthy forms, then the symbolic organ-language of the body takes over as a means of expression.

An examination of a few diseases will further illustrate how this symbolic organ-language operates in terms of the relationship between psychological factors and illness. As has already been stated, all disease is dependent on the low resistance of the person. This resistance was discussed in terms of the "terrain theory" of medicine. In the case of arthritis, for example, this particular terrain is traceable to many different kinds of wrong modes of living, both in the person's life and in the previous generations of his family.³⁵ Dr. Swain, a doctor in Boston, speaks of 270 cases of arthritis being cured as these people were freed from fear, worry and resentment. He said that at least 60% of all arthritis cases have their origin in a moral conflict of some kind.³⁶

³⁴Ibid. ³⁵Tournier, The Healing of Persons, p. 26.

³⁶Ibid., p. 27.

Two other diseases involving obvious psychological factors are rheumatism and arteriosclerosis. The rheumatoid patient is usually an independent kind of person. He usually fears the future. Tournier says that he emphasizes trusting in the providence of God in treating many of these cases.³⁷ The person with arteriosclerosis usually has a long history of digestive and moral indiscipline. He has no inner sense of restraint or self-control. He is inclined to look to the doctors and their medicine rather than to make any attempt to reform his own life style. These are usually active people who take on all kinds of responsibilities.

Another area of diseases strongly connected with emotions is the area of skin reactions. The skin is usually an accurate reporter of what is going on inside a person. As one example, Tournier tells of a male patient who always got new boils when he argued with his wife.³⁸ Anger and resentment manifested themselves on his skin. Again, the terrain theory is involved in this example. The germ staphylococci which causes boils is always present on the surface of the skin. The emotional condition of a person can produce lowered resistance and thus a boil begins to form. The list of psychosomatic factors in all disease could go on and on. Suffice it to say, there are usually emotional factors involved in every disease as the terrain theory seems to indicate.

The technique of confession is a useful tool in the counseling

³⁷Ibid., p. 28. ³⁸Ibid., p. 36.

process. In regard to this technique, Pierre Janet has put forth a theory which he calls the "contraction of consciousness."³⁹ This theory says that when a deep-seated tendency which is opposed to the moral ideal of the person manifests itself within the person, or is expressed outwardly in some action, the memory of these feelings or acts are repressed, they are driven out of the field of consciousness. Later these repressed tendencies reappear in the form of mental pictures, dreams, bungled actions or else as neurotic symptoms such as paralysis, functional disorders and obsessions. Christianity uses the term sin to describe these tendencies which are opposed to man's moral ideal. Man tends to close his eyes to his own faults and failures. The process of repentance is the recovery of consciousness of sin.⁴⁰ This recovery of the consciousness of sin in one area of a person's life tends to start an expansion process in which other areas of sin come into the field of consciousness and then can be confessed or released. Tournier has suggested one technique in confessional counseling which he has found helpful.⁴¹ In terms of this technique, the patient is instructed to be in a meditative attitude and to ask God to reveal the things in his life which are contrary to His will for that person. As the thoughts begin to come, the patient writes them down. The writing out of the revealed thoughts is especially important because it helps the patient to formulate and organize his often hazy thoughts as they begin to come into consciousness. This technique

³⁹Ibid., p. 245.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 246.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 234.

is useful in bringing to the surface many forgotten memories that may still be causing the patient pain in the present.

It seems to be a fact that a person must have a conviction of his own sinfulness before any real and lasting spiritual or physical transformation can take place. Science has often destroyed man's sense of moral responsibility by attributing all malfunctionings of a person's character to a faulty endocrine gland or some other physical disorder. But as emphasized above, man is both a physical and a spiritual being. Man has been created according to the perfect image of God. He is a moral creature by nature. When that morality is violated, the consequences follow in terms of all kinds of mental and physical disorders.

There are many psychological barriers which get in the way of honest confession. The therapist must be on guard when a confession comes too easily.⁴² Honest confession is always a hard struggle because of the barriers which must be overcome. Freud called these barriers "censorship."⁴³ Many therapists have tried to overcome censorship by denying the reality of sin. They put forth no moral judgment on the patient's behavior, hoping to create a permissive atmosphere in which the patient will feel free to air his true feelings. The acceptance side of the counseling relationship is quite important, but the confrontation side is equally important. Christian love overcomes the resistance of censorship in another manner. The Christian

⁴²Ibid., p. 237.

⁴³Ibid.

religion has always recognized sin as sin with no hesitance. God is portrayed as abhorring hidden sin, but He is seen as ready to forgive the repentant sinner who confesses openly his sin. Christianity has always recognized that a person's illness or disease is often rooted in his own violation of his God-given moral nature. The effect of sin cannot be eliminated simply by denying the existence of sin. The effects of sin are overcome through the process of confession and forgiveness.

HEALTH AND THE WHOLE PERSON

Thus far the discussion has focused on the sick side of man in his sinful condition which contributes greatly to the whole phenomenon of disease. A few positive remarks in terms of health are also necessary. Health is not merely the absence of disease; rather, it is a quality of life as a whole.⁴⁴ The medical profession has been very conscientious in terms of creating many kinds of preventative medical programs, such as health education in the schools, school medical services, physical education emphases, and the like. But there is also the need for more concentration on spiritual renewal in order to effectively promote health in society.⁴⁵ A total transformation of a person is needed, rather than the kind of patch-up job often offered by present-day medical knowledge.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 185.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 186.

There is a definite principle at work in the process of life, which has traditionally been called the law of God.⁴⁶ Disease results when man is not true to this law; i.e., his own moral nature. But health is dependent not only on not breaking the law of God; a daily kind of communion with Him is also necessary. This daily kind of communion with God calls for a new kind of life-discipline. This kind of discipline is not a rigid, formalistic following of external laws, but rather a spontaneous joyous response to the presence of Christ in one's life.⁴⁷ Paul called this kind of attitude "freedom in Christ."⁴⁸

The process of sanctification is also observable in the counseling process. As was stated above, the needed discipline of life is not a rigid, legalistic discipline. The Christian message is not merely a collection of divine laws to which man ought to conform. The gospel is not a call for effort and struggle as much as it is a call to faithfulness. This faithfulness involves a reliance on the Holy Spirit of God to transform a person from within. This transformation cannot be accomplished by obeying certain laws. Psychiatrists outside of the Christian religion, such as Fritz Pearls, have shown the futility of trying to get rid of obsessions, fears and the like simply by trying harder. The Christian message confirms this fact by saying that man cannot save himself from his present condition. Central to Tournier's mode of counseling is the fact that Jesus Christ can erupt into a person's life, relaxing tensions, bringing new confidence, and

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 189.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 190.

⁴⁸Galatians 5:1.

liberating the person from the bonds that once held him.⁴⁹ This new liberation does not usually happen all at once. A conversion experience represents a person's willingness to be open to the supernatural power of God. But the actual transformation takes time, as the person grows in his new mode of life.

The concepts of suggestion and faith have always played an important role in the area of spiritual healing. Many doctors have recognized that some kind of a religious faith on the part of the patient is often a powerful means of restoring peace and confidence to a troubled mind. The whole faith process is often described in purely psychological terms with no concern for the spiritual meaning. In psychological terms, the word "faith" would be replaced by "suggestion." Many religious thinkers see this kind of word substitution as a kind of degrading of the spiritual, whereby faith is seen merely in human terms with no regard for the spiritual. This may be the case, but scientific research into the whole area of suggestion is significant for the field of spiritual healing. It would be intellectually dishonest to refuse to see in various genuine religious experiences the psychological process of suggestion at work.⁵⁰ But it must also be said that faith need not be defended in the light of scientific research into suggestion. Science can define quite accurately the mechanism of suggestion. It can help to understand

⁴⁹Tournier, The Healing of Persons, p. 210.

⁵⁰Tournier, The Person Reborn, p. 143.

more fully how some of the laws of suggestion operate. But the why questions are still left to the realm of religion. The dynamic force working through all suggestion is the power of God Himself.

The mechanism of suggestion plays a vital part in all illness. In terms of the mechanics of the body, the sense organs send neutral signals to the brain. It is the conscious mind which gives these signals the value judgment of pleasant or unpleasant, beautiful or ugly, according to the suggestions a person has assimilated from his culture.⁵¹ In dealing with ailments due to suggestion, it must be remembered that the suggestion mechanism operates at an unconscious level. The patient, therefore, finds it difficult to agree that his stomach problem, for example, is caused by suggestions he has acquired through various associations. He will find various objective causes for his trouble, rather than admit that suggestion is involved; e.g., he has eaten something that has disagreed with him, or else it is the hot, dry wind that has caused his problem, and so on. These ideas which he has suggested to himself then become sources of suggestion in themselves, so that the stomach symptoms will reappear if he eats the same food again or if he is exposed to the hot, dry wind again. He is blocked in his healing until he can recognize that the mechanism of suggestion is indeed at work in his particular ailment. Tournier says that the mechanism of suggestion is at the root of all functional disorders; i.e., disorders which interfere with the proper functioning

⁵¹Ibid., p. 145.

of the bodily organs without affecting them structurally.⁵²

The process of association is always at work in disorders due to suggestion. Pavlov's experiments with the dog and the bell illustrate this concept of association. Whenever the dog began to eat his food, Pavlov would ring a bell. Soon Pavlov only had to ring the bell in order to start the secretion of digestive juices in the dog. A conditioned reflex had become associated with the ringing of the bell. Likewise, many ailments become associated with different kinds of unrelated stimuli in the environment of the person. Like the reflex action conditioned into Pavlov's dog, functional disorders disappear after a period of time unless the disorder is maintained by an overly charged emotion connected with the disorder.

There are several ways in which an overly charged emotion can block the spontaneous healing of any functional disorder. It has already been shown how the patient can vehemently oppose the doctor's interpretation of his ailment as being due to suggestion. Until he can accept the fact that suggestion is at work in his disorder, he can not be healed. Another similar attitude involved in the blocking of healing is the embarrassment or shame people feel when they are told that their condition is due to their own self-suggestion.⁵³ To many people this means that it is all imaginary and "in one's head." They begin to feel that they just need more will power to think correctly. But their own willful efforts at changing their thinking

⁵²Ibid., p. 146.

⁵³Ibid., p. 148.

usually just increases the disorder, because their constant concentration on the suggestion at work merely strengthens the suggestion. The person subject to insomnia who tries hard to go to sleep is a good example of how trying hard to produce the desired results usually fails and just increases the anxiety. Victor Frankl has used the technique of "paradoxical intention" successfully with many of his clients.⁵⁴ In the case of insomnia, for example, he would advise the person to try as hard as he could to stay awake. This reversing of the intentions seems to lessen the anxiety, and thus the person spontaneously falls asleep.

When improvement does begin to take place, another emotion often begins to block complete healing. The slightest relapse or the fear of relapse can start the anxiety process going again, and full relapse can often occur.⁵⁵ This situation can lead to a vicious circle kind of syndrome. There is also the ordinary blocking of healing produced by habit.⁵⁶ The body and mind operate according to habits, both helpful and detrimental, which take a long time to disappear. Replacing old useless patterns of behavior with new ones is usually difficult.

The church has often failed to recognize the power of faith in terms of suggestion.⁵⁷ The Christian message has always emphasized

⁵⁴Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), p. 196.

⁵⁵Tournier, The Person Reborn, p. 148.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 149.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 150.

the fact that God loves and upholds His children as a loving father. Knowledge of this fact alone has a healing effect. The gospel has also been seen as containing healing power in helping people. The church also has this healing power available to it today if it can only believe that this power is real and present today. How this power can be released will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF PRAYER IN HEALING

This chapter will examine spiritual healing from the perspective of those who are actually working in this field of prayer and healing. Much of the discussion will be based on the writings of Agnes Sanford, a woman who has become a leader in the area of spiritual healing. Most of her life has been involved in the healing of people through prayer, especially within the context of the Episcopal Church, a church which has taken spiritual healing seriously for some time. Much of this chapter will focus on Sanford's method of spiritual healing.

A METHOD OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

Sanford's book, The Healing Light (1947), is considered to be a classic in the field of spiritual healing. In this book she uses an analogy which introduces her theory of healing. She says,

If we try turning on an electric iron and it does not work, we look to the wiring of the iron, the cord, or the house. We do not stand in dismay before the iron and cry, "Oh, electricity, please come into my iron and make it work." We realize that while the whole world is full of electricity, only the amount that flows through the wiring of the iron will make the iron work for us.¹

¹Agnes Sanford, The Healing Light (St. Paul: Macalester Park, 1947), p. 1.

This analogy describes the human situation in which the power of God is always ready to heal a person. The whole universe is full of the power of God's Spirit, but it is only as that Spirit is flowing in a person that it will actually create healing. In terms of the dynamics of electricity, this analogy is a good one. The process of electricity flowing through a wire does not involve some substance called electric energy flowing in one end of the wire and flowing out the other end. The electrons moving from one atom to the next are more comparable to a series of balls placed side by side in which the last ball in the series will be moved if the first ball is struck. In this chain reaction process, nothing like a substance moves from the first ball to the last; rather, it is the movement itself which produces the reaction. Likewise, in healing there is not a substance called God's Spirit that flows into a person from the outside. The phrase "flow into a person" is only man's limited human way of describing the operation of God's Spirit. The spiritual energy is already potential within every person. That potential need only be activated for healing to take place. This idea is much like the discussion concerning the Spiritual Presence in Tillich's system. There the fact was discussed that the Spiritual Presence is not some force invading the person from the outside, but rather it is a total presence within the being of man.²

Many people pray with no observable results and therefore

²Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), III, 276.

conclude that God is not willing to heal them. But the healing narratives presented in the gospels seem to conclude that God does want health and wholeness for man. Jesus spent much of his time healing the sick. There must be some other explanation of why healing does not always take place in a person. In this regard, Albert Day says,

I find it impossible to assume that healings are a matter of divine decree, which, for no apparent reason, selects some for restoration and abandons others to the ravages of crippling or fatal disease. I cannot but believe that God's will includes everyone in its provision and its mercy; that sin and sickness belong to the kingdom of evil and that the kingdom of God seeks to destroy that kingdom wherever it invades human life; that if there is neither holiness nor health, it is not because God is indifferent or uncaring, but that man and his personal way of life and his social institutions hinder the saving, healing work of God.³

God is not an impulsive sovereign who breaks his own laws at will.⁴

It is more logical to conclude that disease is the result of man's breaking one of God's laws.

A miracle is not the breaking of God's laws for some special purpose; rather, it is the right use of one of those laws in a way that allows a higher law of healing to transcend a lower law of disease. If prayer for healing does not produce the desired results, it seems logical that the right laws have not been discovered or put into effect in order to allow the healing to take place. Just as a

³ Albert Day, Letters on the Healing Ministry (Nashville: Methodist Evangelical Materials, 1964), p. 57.

⁴ Sanford, The Healing Light, p. 4.

scientist must conduct experiments so as to discover certain physical laws of the universe, likewise a serious student of prayer must conduct experiments in order to discover the spiritual laws of the universe. It is a known fact that certain physical laws can transcend other laws in order to allow certain phenomena to occur. For example, the laws of jet propulsion and aerodynamics can transcend the laws of gravity, thus allowing an object heavier than air to fly. Likewise, God can use laws which man has not discovered in order to accomplish healing. As was stated above, experimentation is necessary in order to discover how these laws operate.

Sanford suggests a four-step method to be used in conducting these kinds of prayer experiments.⁵ The first step in this experimental approach involves "contacting" the source of healing power--i.e., the Spirit of God. The Quakers use the phrase "centering down" to describe this first step. This is the process of becoming aware of the fact that there is a power outside and inside man which is the very source of his life. Concentration on the relaxation of the body is helpful during this first step. The second step involves "connecting" with that source of power. Sanford suggests a prayer such as, "Heavenly Father, please increase in me at this time your life-giving power."⁶ In the third step, the person pictures the power of God actively working within him. In attempting to believe that the power of God is working, Sanford suggests that the person praying

⁵Ibid., p. 6.

⁶Ibid.

offer thanks that the power of God is now working. This conscious awareness of giving thanks helps the conscious and the sub-conscious mind believe that God's power is indeed now working. It is helpful to imagine God's healing power as a kind of light radiating within the body, especially radiating in the affected area of the body for which one is praying.⁷ The fourth step involves the person vividly picturing the affected part of his body as healed and whole. This "imaging" process is essential in Sanford's method.⁸

God has allowed man to be a partner with Him in the process of creation. When God created the world in the beginning of Genesis, He said, "Let there be light." But the Biblical account also says, "And God saw that the light was good." The process of "seeing it" is a vital part of the creating process.⁹ If the person praying is to create health from disease, then he must also use his imaging ability. He must see the desired results in his mind and give thanks for them as becoming accomplished realities.

In order to obtain results in this kind of process, the prayer of faith must be utilized.¹⁰ Meditational literature often refers to the different traditional categories of prayer; e.g., prayers of

⁷Ibid.

⁸Agnes Sanford, Behold Your God (Saint Paul: Macalester Park, 1958), p. 19.

⁹Agnes Sanford, from a lecture given March 21, 1973, at St. Mathius Episcopal Church, Whittier, California.

¹⁰Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 19.

worship and thanksgiving, purely meditational prayers aimed at being aware of God's presence, prayers for guidance and strength. Often the person praying for a healing mistakenly uses a prayer of guidance, whereas he should be using a prayer of faith.¹¹ In a prayer for guidance the person says, "Heal this person if it be Thy will." The problem is that the if should have already been taken care of before the prayer of faith is used. When Jesus healed the sick, his prayer of faith was always prayed with absolute confidence that this particular healing was in God's will and he knew for certain that his word would produce results in the person for whom he prayed. If a prayer of guidance was involved, it must have taken place before he actually started to pray for the sick person.¹²

The imagery of light plays an important role in Sanford's method of healing. As was stated above in discussing Sanford's four-step healing prayer, the person praying is to imagine a kind of light radiating in his body or in the body of the one for whom he is praying. Sanford concludes from her own experiments in prayer that God's healing power is an actual light of a very high frequency.¹³ She says that many people report to her that they feel a kind of inner heat in the part of their body being prayed for when she has laid her hands on them and prayed. There is some scientific research which has been done in regard to certain high frequency light and sound waves. The use of

¹¹Ibid., p. 28.

¹²Ibid., p. 29.

¹³Sanford, The Healing Light, p. 17.

ultra-sonic sound waves and infra-red and ultra-violet light in certain kinds of medical treatment are clinical examples of this kind of healing with light and sound. Sanford says that the power that goes through her to another person is God's light. In this sense, a person is to literally be the "light of the world," as he makes himself available as a channel of this light.¹⁴

The following example will show how Sanford often deals with a person when she is counseling with him and praying for him. She tells of a G.I. named Sammy who was in the orthopedic ward of an army hospital with a shattered thigh bone that wasn't healing.¹⁵ If nature didn't soon heal the bone, they were going to try a bone graft. Sanford told Sammy that he could bring more of nature's healing power into his leg by asking for it. She told him to ask God for more of this healing power to come into his leg and then to believe that God was doing just that and thank Him for it. Then she told him to form a picture in his mind of the bone all built in and the flesh strong and perfect around it. She also told him to imagine a kind of blue light burning and flowing up and down his leg. He wondered why he should go through this imagining process. She used the example of a carpenter making a table. In order for the carpenter to make the table, he had to first see it in his mind. Then she told Sammy to congratulate all the healing forces in his body on how good a job they were doing. She advised him to go through this process at least once a day and more if

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 18.

it wasn't too tiring for him. She told him to play at it like a game rather than to work too hard at it. She suggested that he use his imagination in a playful way, for example, by seeing himself running and jumping over fences. In about three weeks Sammy was walking well with a brace. He attributed this rapid progress to the method Sanford had shown him.

This imagining process is central in Sanford's method. Thanking God for the healing before anything observable happens is also a key factor in this method. Sanford says, "Just believing a set of facts about God does not necessarily turn on the power in a single one of our prayer objectives."¹⁶ The power is set into motion by believing that the healing is already taking place. Rejoicing and giving thanks for the healing helps to strengthen one's affirmation that healing is taking place.

OBSTACLES TO HEALING

It is an obvious fact that healing is not always as simple as it has been described thus far. One of the common blocks to healing through prayer is the constant influence of the sub-conscious mind which actually controls the body. The sub-conscious mind does not respond to reason, but rather to suggestion.¹⁷ For example, the fear of catching a cold will often result in actually catching a cold. The

¹⁶Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 26.

sub-conscious mind is a kind of inner control system regulating the bodily processes of the human organism. This inner control center is part of the spiritual body of man. It acts under the direction of the divine impulse within a person until that person sends a contrary command and throws it into confusion.¹⁸ For example, in the above example of catching a cold, the body naturally produces white corpuscles which have the purpose of destroying cold germs. But the thought, "I'm afraid I'm catching a cold," sends a contrary command to the sub-conscious control center, which immediately telegraphs the white corpuscles to reduce resistance, since the command now is to catch a cold. The bodily regulating devices are thrown into confusion thus weakening the natural body defenses against cold germs.

Furthermore, the sub-conscious mind keeps everything a person has ever felt or learned stored within it. Therefore, all the negative thought-suggestions of fear, illness, limitation and lacks are stored in the sub-conscious mind. These negative thought patterns are bound to have an effect on the condition of the body and mind. The whole field of psychosomatic medicine seems to verify the influence of negative thought patterns on the body. In the preceding chapter the terrain theory was discussed in this regard.

When one attempts the healing experiments described above, many of these negative thought patterns come into operation. Feelings of doubt and suspicion arise because man's culture has taught him that

¹⁸Ibid., p. 25.

healing takes place only through medical means. People have been conditioned against healing through spiritual means. The more a person tries to resist these negative thought patterns, the more he is controlled by them.¹⁹ A vicious cycle results in which the fear of one's own thoughts is added to the fear of the present illness, thus blocking further the healing power of God. Jesus' statement, "Resist not evil" might point to the kind of attitude called for here. A kind of disinterested approach to these negative thoughts seems more effective than an active attacking effort to forget them. When negative thoughts come to mind, Sanford suggests thinking a thought like the following:

Oh, that! That's nothing. It's only the old thought habit that hasn't quite faded out. I'm learning a new thought habit, and pretty soon I won't think that way anymore. But in the meantime, it can't hurt me at all, because my real self is a child of God and so is full of faith and power.²⁰

This process of teaching the sub-conscious mind a new thought pattern is in a sense a process of unlearning much of what one has been taught to be true. But the whole process of unlearning is done in a passive, disinterested manner, rather than an aggressive kind of fighting off negative thought patterns. Any impatience or discouragement simply tightens the nerves of the body and increases the anxiety and doubt that much more. The more relaxed and passive approach seems to be the more workable.

A second obstacle to healing is the feeling of unworthiness.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 46.

As was stated in regard to Tournier's theory, man was created as a moral being. There is a spark of the divine within the spirit of man which demands moral perfection. When man deviates from this morally perfect image in which he was created, he suffers the consequences in terms of all kinds of aches and pains and illnesses. Disease and illness are directly related to wrong behavior and wrong attitudes. The Ten Commandments and the more stringent version of these commandments given by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount were not given as just arbitrary laws to be followed for the sake of obedience. These commandments point to the basic moral nature of man. A breaking of these commandments represents a deviation from the image of God after which man was created.

Deviating from the original image of God according to which man was created is a deviation from the "stern law of love."²² God created man according to the principle of love. When that principle of love is ignored, man suffers the consequences. Jesus said, "Whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment."²³ The judgment on that anger begins immediately in the form of stomach troubles, headaches, backaches and the like. If anger and hate literally destroy the body and mind of man, love literally creates life within man. Love is the attitude through which healing takes place. It was the love Jesus had for the people he healed that actually brought about the healing. Love actually generates a

²²Sanford, The Healing Light, p. 37. ²³Matt. 5:22.

healing, creating, transforming energy. Sanford tells of one example that vividly illustrates the power of love. She tells of an engineer who was surveying a field when a bull charged their survey party.²⁴

There was no tree or fence to climb, so the engineer began to consciously fill his mind with the love of God, and he projected this love to the bull. He said to himself, "God made both of us, and in the name of Jesus Christ I say that there is nothing but loving kindness between us." The bull suddenly stopped in his tracks and looked around as if he were confused. He then wandered off and lay under a bush peacefully. This story sounds incredible, but Sanford can verify it along with many other such examples which illustrate the real power of love. Man's job becomes one of re-educating himself in love. In situations which would normally produce anger and hate, a person is to consciously fill his mind with love. This attitude of love can become a learned habit.

In light of the kind of evidence presented above, the thoughts of a person seem to have a direct effect on his environment. In a paper on prayer, Frank Kimper discusses the fact that every one of a person's encounters with his environment somehow affects the whole of the universe.²⁵ The universe is seen as an organism in which every part affects every other part. Within this organism, people exist as "bundles of energy--intelligently structured, but functionally active

²⁴Sanford, The Healing Light, p. 41.

²⁵Frank Kimper, "Musings About the Dynamics of Prayer," in "Prayer as Dialogue: Its Theory and Application" (unpublished Rel. D. Dissertation. School of Theology at Claremont, 1972), p. 92.

energy--intimately related to many other bundles of energy--fields of force interpenetrating and inter-dependent, extending through the entire reach of space-time."²⁶ If this is indeed the case, then the thoughts of a person will have a direct effect on other persons and other living organisms. According to Kimper's theory, thoughts are the structural organizers of the energy existing within man.²⁷ Thoughts then become real entities in the form of energy and therefore can exhibit a real impact on the environment of a person. This seemed to be the case involving the bull and the engineer as described above.

REDEMPTION AND HEALING

Thus far, the discussion has focused on what man must consciously do in order for healing to take place. He must have faith, he must become morally perfect and he must exercise love. These kinds of tasks are, of course, easier said than done. Man knows that these are things that he should do, but the human condition hinders him. If healing depended only on what man could do, there would be very few signs of healing. But the main initiative involved is still with God. In this regard, it will be helpful to discuss Sanford's theory of redemption.

According to Sanford, Jesus Christ came to this earth to release God's love into the situation of man, so that man could be

²⁶Ibid., p. 93.

²⁷Ibid.

free from the evil that holds him in bondage.²⁸ Traditionally, religious people have talked about the forgiveness of sins and the gift of everlasting life which comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The question arises as to what this death of almost two thousand years ago does for man as he exists today. Sanford says that the act of redemption actually began in the Garden of Gethsemane.²⁹ The Gethsemane narrative indicates that some burden tormented Jesus to the point where he cried out, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."³⁰ This tremendous burden could not have been the fear of death alone. He had contemplated death many times before this hour; in fact he had already told his disciples that he would soon die. Sanford says that the sin of mankind was literally killing him at this point in the garden.³¹ Jesus literally took into his being all the grief and sorrow of mankind. It was the weight of that grief and sorrow that finally killed him.

This theory of redemption is clarified in terms of Sanford's concept of man as he exists in his sinful condition in the world. She says that man is a combination of spirit, conscious mind and unconscious mind.³² The spirit of man is a direct off-shoot of God's Spirit. There is also a connection between the divine spirit of man and his sub-conscious mind. But through failing to heed God's word,

²⁸Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 88.

²⁹Ibid., p. 89.

³⁰Matt. 26:39. ³¹Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 90. ³²Ibid.

which resulted in sin or distortion, this connection was obstructed. The sub-conscious mind was no longer in communion with God and no longer motivated by His impulse. Somehow the sub-conscious mind had to be reunited with the divine spirit planted within man. Traditionally, the church has talked about the reconciliation of man to God accomplished through Jesus Christ. In Sanford's model, this reconciliation means that the obstruction between man's mind and the divine spirit within him is abolished. The channel between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man was potentially cleaned out through the redemptive work of Christ.

Jesus could not accomplish this miracle of redemption from outside of man. He couldn't accomplish this miracle even by walking among men in human form. He had to become completely identified with the totality of men's minds. From the perspective of man's limited finitude, it is not fully comprehensible how he did this. But man can get a glimpse of what is involved by thinking about the process of one person empathizing with another. Through the love of one person for another, one is able to experience some of the other's pain or grief. If this kind of experience of feeling another's pain through empathy was magnified by the totality of mankind, including past, present and future, one could get a limited idea of the pain and sin that really began to kill Jesus starting in the Garden of Gethsemane. The pain and the sin he took into himself literally began to eat away at his body until it killed him. It was not merely the cross that killed Jesus.³³ It is known that the average man could live about twenty-four

³³Ibid., p. 100.

hours on the cross. Even humanly speaking, Jesus was stronger than the average man, but the scriptures indicate that he died in less than six hours. Again, this kind of evidence supports the idea that the sin of mankind literally killed Jesus. Jesus identified himself so thoroughly with the lowest depths of mankind that at one point he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"³⁴ At that point his identification was complete. His task of redemption was completed and he died, putting his spirit into the hands of his Father. At this point the perfect love of God working in Jesus Christ completely transformed all of man's sin and agony into perfect goodness and wholeness. The transforming power of love on a human level has already been discussed. In the work of redemption the infinite love of God transforms evil into perfect goodness.

Of course, the question arises as to why there is still so much pain and agony in the world today. If God incarnate in Jesus Christ transformed all sin into perfect goodness, then why is man still plagued with fear and anxiety? The problem is rooted in the fact that man has not been able to accept such a great miracle as the complete forgiveness and transformation of all sin.³⁵ Man still has free will and is able to reject God's plan of redemption for him. As was already said in terms of Tillich's system, man must accept his acceptance! What most Christians have done is to push the results of Christ's death and resurrection into some vague after-life. It is

³⁴Matt. 27:46.

³⁵Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 105.

often said that Christ died so that man can enter heaven after dies. But this is only part of the truth. Eternal life begins now! Men become new creatures beginning now, in this life.³⁶ In II Corinthians 3:18 Paul says, "And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is Spirit." If this statement is accepted as true, then it follows that men are actually being changed into God's perfect image at the present time. People often have the notion that God just completely overlooks man's sin and short-comings. But the scriptures say that God is love. Perfect love does not just blindly accept evil. It transforms evil into good, although this is not done by force. It is done as man freely accepts it through faith. Man is healed by the wounds of Christ, not just made to appear healed.³⁷ This kind of healing becomes a reality in a person's daily experience when he can accept it as being true for him. A person's believing is still one of the main conditions for healing, just as Jesus emphasized.³⁸

In Sanford's theory the resurrection stands for the complete miracle of healing. Through the resurrection, death itself was healed.³⁹ All disease and illness, both physical and mental, are degrees of a kind of death. Disease is always pulling toward death

³⁶ II Cor. 5:17.

³⁷ I Peter 2:24.

³⁸ Mark 11:24.

³⁹ Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 115.

against the natural instinct of the organism striving toward health. Potentially anyway, the power of death was broken in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the same healing power of God that raised Jesus from death that works in man now for healing.⁴⁰ Because of the resurrection, Christ is still within the human situation in a personal way, mediating all the spiritual power of God to man. He is still very much God and very much man as the creeds have tried to emphasize throughout church history. Because he is still both human and divine in a special way even now, he becomes the mediator of healing for mankind. Man is able to do the miracles that Jesus did on the earth, not because he has the Christ Spirit or energy within him, not even because he taught man how to do these works through his teachings, but because Christ himself is still very much in the world doing the work he has always done.⁴¹ He is not in the world just as spiritual energy like electricity; rather he is a living, personal, spiritual being, one with God in one sense and yet a distinct entity in his own right.⁴²

The third person of the Trinity is also significant in terms of Sanford's theory of healing. The Holy Spirit is the personalized presence of God within the human situation, according to Sanford.⁴³ This Spirit gives life to man's spirit. Just as Christ is distinct in his being in his relationship to God the Father, so the Holy Spirit is also distinct in his being from God the Father and God the Son. The

⁴⁰ Romans 8:11.

⁴¹ Sanford, Behold Your God, p. 124.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 130.

mystery of God being one in three and three in one, totally one and yet distinct and individual in each of his persons is still a mystery to man's finite mind. But the concept of the Trinity, involving the three functional persons of the Godhead, does seem to give man a working relationship with God. Sanford says that it was as she began to see the Holy Spirit as a person that she began to experience her healing ministry in a new way, a way which required much less effort and fatigue on her part.⁴⁴ In regard to this new awareness, she describes the following experience. In faith she, along with two other friends, asked Jesus to baptize them with the Holy Spirit, just as the book of Acts reports many people being baptized in the Holy Spirit. She described the experience that followed this petition as "a deep burning in the middle of her head."⁴⁵ The main result that followed was a deep abiding joy in her total being. She said that from that day on, her prayers of intercession were done with no strain or exhaustion as she had always felt before this experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She felt that the Holy Spirit did give her a new power which she had not known before.⁴⁶

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

The gifts of the Spirit as listed by Paul in I Corinthians 12:4-10 are also relevant to this discussion on spiritual healing.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 133.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 132.

⁴⁶Acts 1:8.

These gifts include: the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, the gift of faith, the gifts of healing, the working of miracles, the gift of prophecy, the discernment of spirits, the gift of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. In attempting to understand these gifts, it is helpful to realize that some of these gifts are already present in man in some way even within the natural realm of things. For example, in regard to the gift of wisdom, man naturally has a certain degree of common sense and wisdom. But a supernatural gift of wisdom can be added to man's natural wisdom through the quickening of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ This involves direct divine guidance from God in different situations in which a person might need such guidance.

Before continuing with this discussion on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it might be helpful to present a brief summary definition of the nine spiritual gifts listed by Paul in the Corinthians passage cited above. In a German publication called Gnadengaben, a commentary on I Corinthians 12-14, Arnold Bittlinger defines the gifts in the following manner:

1. The Word of Wisdom--In a difficult or dangerous situation, a Christian will be given a word of wisdom which solves the problem, or silences an opponent. This is not the same as the wisdom of the individual acquired through experience. It is rather a "word" of wisdom, which will be given to various members of the congregation according to a need.

2. The Word of Knowledge--This gift reveals facts from the natural or supernatural world which a Christian would not be able to know by normal means.

⁴⁷ Agnes Sanford, The Healing Gifts of the Spirit (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966), p. 75.

3. Faith--This is not the "faith unto salvation" which every Christian has, nor the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22), which every Christian should bring forth, but this is the "mountain moving faith" (Matthew 17:20; I Corinthians 13:2), which individual Christians may manifest as a gift of the Spirit.

4. Healing--The main thrust of this gift is toward healing of the body from physical infirmity. Beyond that, however, it would apply to the healing of the "whole man"--body, soul and spirit.

5. Miracles--This gift goes beyond the miraculous healing of the body to include miracles of every sort. The object of the miracle is determined by the situation and need of the moment.

6. Prophecy--The primary emphasis in this gift is not upon predicting future events, but upon an appropriate and needed word in the present situation--a word of upbuilding, encouragement, consolation (I Corinthians 14:3). This word, of course, may well include a glance either into the past or into the future.

7. Discernment of Spirits--This gift enables the Church of Christ and her members to distinguish between divine, human and demonic powers--to discern the source of a particular utterance or action.

8. Speaking in Tongues--Through this gift, the exalted Lord gives the members of His Church the power to "express the inexpressable" and praise God in new speech.

9. Interpretation--This is a "sister gift" which makes it possible and useful for the gift of tongues to be used in a group meeting. Interpretation is not an exact "translation" of the utterance in tongues, nor a commentary upon it, but is a rendering in the vernacular of the content or "gist" of the utterance in tongues. The one who speaks in tongues speaks to⁴⁸ God; the one who interprets receives the interpretation from God.

As was described above in terms of the gift of wisdom, gifts are not things that are imposed upon a person from the outside. Rather, through the inspiration and the energizing of the Holy Spirit, natural gifts within man are intensified and refined. The gift of

⁴⁸ Arnold Bittlinger, Gnadengaben, in Speaking in Tongues (Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1968). p. 115.

healing can also be examined in these terms. The gift of healing is already a part of man.⁴⁹ Man seems to instinctively know this when he places his hands on a child or an animal in order to give comfort or give peace. Something seems to be transmitted through the hands as a person touches those for whom he cares. The gift of healing may be more pronounced in some people who seem to have a more natural faith, a livelier imagination or most important, a closer walk with God.⁵⁰ But as a person seeks for and prays for this gift to become more manifest in his life, it does. His own sincere desire for the gift of healing opens him more fully to the Spirit who inspires such gifts.

The gift of wisdom is a necessary tool for anyone entering the ministry of healing. An example from Sanford's own beginning ministry will illustrate this fact. She describes one of her first attempts at spiritual healing as a complete failure.⁵¹ Moved by compassion for a young man in a mental hospital, she went to him in faith to pray for him. There were absolutely no results accomplished through her prayers. And yet three months later a case of shingles was completely healed in two days through her prayers. Sanford says that this particular failure was due to the fact that she had not prayed for the gift of wisdom. In regard to healing, this gift allows one to know for whom he is to pray. It is true that all things are possible through God. The problem is that all things are not possible through

⁴⁹Sanford, The Healing Gifts of the Spirit, p. 164.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 73.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 75.

various people at their particular stage of growth in the work of the Spirit. As a person prays for leading, he will be led to those for whom he is to pray, considering his particular stage of growth and readiness. Without the gift of wisdom, the person wishing to engage in spiritual healing will most likely do more harm than good.

Another gift which is vital for the healing ministry is the gift of knowledge. This gift is said to give a person insight which could not naturally be obtained. In regard to healing, this gift allows one to see into his own sub-conscious mind and to become aware of anything which may be blocking healing.⁵² Likewise, a person engaged in spiritual healing may often be given insight into another person's sub-conscious in order to help that person become open for healing. This gift is involved in the confessional process which was described in chapter three. Often certain events and traumatic situations in the past of a person are blocking that person from leading a full life in the present. In dealing with one's own life, Sanford suggests a focused prayer in which a person can ask God to reveal to him anything which is blocking him from living the full life God intended. As a person does this, often certain childhood situations may come to mind which the person had completely forgotten. Or, sometimes past unresolved resentments or fears will come to mind. Often the mere remembrance of these things will produce a certain

⁵²Ibid., p. 108.

amount of healing. For example, a past unforgiving attitude may come forth in one's mind which becomes healed as that person consciously, through an act of will, forgives the person involved.

But many times a person's own conscious acts of will are not enough to produce the needed healing of a memory. This is the flaw in the Freudian model of psychoanalysis in which the therapist tries to bring about healing merely by getting the patient to remember certain traumatic events in his past. Often there is the need for a healer outside of the person in order for the healing to take place. That healer is Jesus Christ.⁵³ Sanford's theory of redemption through Jesus' identification with humanity was discussed above. Sanford says that in counseling with a person she will often have the person picture Jesus walking back through his life to the time of some particular traumatic event. He is to see Jesus healing the pain connected with that event at that particular time. Sanford says that as a person becomes involved in this process through vivid imaging, the Spirit of Christ transforms those memories.⁵⁴ In working with a person she will make word pictures for the person in which the little child in the person, who at some time was hurt, is seen as being completely healed by the touch of Jesus. Sanford admits that she does not know how this process works; she only knows that it does.

This kind of counseling through prayer does not involve a lot of analysis trying to show a person certain cause and effect relationships

⁵³ Ibid., p. 119.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

between past events and his present behavior. The intercessory prayer is the main instrument which brings about the healing. Often the faith of the counselee is not involved too much because his faith may be too weak at this time. The faith of the person praying may become the only channel of healing able to penetrate through to this person. In this regard, Albert Day makes the observation that through intercessory prayer, one person may receive a thought from God and then pass it on to another person who could not be open enough to the vertical dimension but who could be open enough on the horizontal human level.⁵⁵ In this way, God is given a channel through which he can send healing into the human situation. In this sense, God has created a situation in which he needs the prayers of persons in order to accomplish his healing purposes. Without these intercessory prayers, much potential healing does not take place.

A final area needing discussion in regard to spiritual healing is the subject of demonism and exorcism. Sanford says that she is convinced of the reality of demons or evil spirits.⁵⁶ Paul labels the gift involved in exorcism as the gift of discernment of spirits (see the summary of the gifts above). The term "possessed" is often used in describing a person who has somehow become controlled by some particular emotion or demon. It has already been discussed how an

⁵⁵Albert Day, An Autobiography of Prayer (Shaker Heights: Disciplined Order of Christ, 1952), p. 207.

⁵⁶Sanford, The Healing Gifts of the Spirit, p. 193.

emotion such as anger can begin literally to eat away a person's body. This emotional reaction of anger, for example, can become an habitual way of thinking which, if indulged in too long, can take on a life of its own.⁵⁷ Jung called this kind of habitual thinking an "autonomous complex."⁵⁸ According to Jung, there are actually outside entities or thought currents of evil that can enter into a person's life through this habitual kind of emotional reaction.⁵⁹ In light of this kind of discussion, the ministry of exorcism becomes relevant for the person seriously studying spiritual healing.

There are, of course, dangers involved in this kind of an approach to healing. To use the approach of exorcism without discernment can create more problems than it can help. Often a dark mood or depression is merely the shadow part of a person rising up from the sub-conscious needing recognition, understanding and adjustment.⁶⁰ To lightly cast out such a mood as if it were caused by a demon may very well close a door to the person's inner self which God has been trying to open for his consideration. But this warning against leaping into exorcism blindly is not intended to discount the validity of exorcism as a method of healing. There does seem to be evidence supporting the idea that demon possession is a real cause of much emotional stress.

Sanford suggests two possible ways of diagnosing whether or not a particular case involves demon possession. She says that the

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 194.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 195.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 196.

gift of discernment sometimes causes the person praying for another to "see" a picture within the mind of a face whose expression expresses the particular emotional character of the demon, be it fear, anger or whatever. A second more useable method is simply to listen to the troubled person describing his feelings. It seems to be a safe rule to follow to not use a prayer of exorcism unless the troubled person specifically indicates in words that this is his need.⁶¹ The troubled person will often use a phrase such as, "I just feel possessed," or "I hear voices that aren't mine." A prayer of exorcism is appropriate in these kinds of cases. Even if the person isn't really possessed, this type of prayer will have power for the person since he has framed his problem in this type of language.

Sanford suggests the following pattern to be used in formulating a prayer of exorcism: 1) She prays for herself and the other person to be surrounded by the protection of Jesus Christ. 2) She commands the invading spirit to leave the person in the name of Jesus Christ. During this phase, she holds within her mind the images of the Cross of Christ and the sword of the Spirit; i.e., the Word of God. 3) She prays that the love of Christ will come and fill up the voids where this evil spirit resided. 4) She prays that the person may be surrounded with divine protection so that nothing else can come near him to trouble him again.⁶² Once again, the danger of dealing in exorcism lightly must be emphasized. One must feel the power of God

⁶¹Ibid., p. 201.

⁶²Ibid., p. 202

to work in this particular kind of healing ministry before attempting it.

Many of the theories described in this chapter are probably not precisely accurate pictures of how the dimension of the spiritual operates. Being a finite creature, man can only speculate about much of this unknown area. But through experimentation certain working hypotheses can be discovered. Again, these hypotheses may not be completely accurate. But in order to use prayer effectively at all, some kind of working hypothesis is needed. A comparable situation is found in the field of science. The atomic theory, for example, is not a precisely accurate model of the atom because no one has ever actually seen an atom. But by observing the behavior of matter under different conditions, scientists have been able to construct a working hypothesis which has allowed them to accomplish a lot of valuable work which would not have been possible without such a hypothesis. Experimentation in the area of prayer can be seen in this same kind of manner. A precisely accurate picture of how the principles of prayer operate cannot be produced, but enough can be known to allow these principles to be put to work for the healing of mankind.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this discussion an attempt has been made to develop a balanced approach to spiritual healing. This investigation has been conducted in terms of examining spiritual healing from three perspectives. The discussion began theologically by examining the basic religious foundations supporting spiritual healing. The concern in this section was man's disintegrated and diseased condition and Jesus as the Christ, the bearer of the New Being, who has come into the human situation in order to transform and heal mankind. The discussion continued with an examination of some of the medical-psychological factors involved in health and disease. It was shown that a person's moral, emotional life has a definite effect on his mental and physiological condition. Finally, some of the more mystical elements involved in spiritual healing were discussed. It was shown that prayer does have a direct effect on the mental and physical condition of a person. The different parts of this investigation now need to be brought into some kind of integrated framework. Several general principles involved in spiritual healing have emerged in this research.

The first basic principle is that healing of the body, mind and soul is definitely involved in God's perfect will for man. Tillich,

Tournier and Sanford all agree that health and wholeness are involved in the Christian message. For Tillich the whole salvation event is aimed at producing healing of the split between man and God. This healing involves uniting man with his true essential being, and integrating the whole person so that he is no longer a mass of fragmented parts with no center. Tournier sees health as the natural state of man. Health is maintained by staying in tune with the moral spirit which is at the center of man's being. Man was created according to the perfect image of God. Health can be maintained by not violating that image. Sanford also believes that God's plan for man is perfect health. From her perspective, man's task is to discover the spiritual laws which can produce health and then to put those laws to work. An absolute knowing that God wants health for mankind is the first step in the process leading to health.

But despite God's perfect will of health for mankind, disease and disintegration are still very much a part of the world. All three resource persons recognize this fact. Tillich sees disease as a part of the old reality which still exists. The present situation in which man lives is a mixture of the new reality brought about through Jesus as the Christ and the old reality which has still not been completely transformed. In this kind of situation healing must remain fragmentary. There is a sense of waiting for the complete transformation of the world. In the words of I John 3:2, "...it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

For Tournier disease is still very much a part of our world because man is not living according to the image in which he was created but is rebelling against his own moral nature. However, disease does serve a purpose. Man's diseased condition can communicate something to him about himself. Disease speaks a clear language if man is sensitive to its meaning. Many diseases point to the area of a person's life in which he is violating the image in which he was created. Medical doctors are becoming more sensitive to the fact that diseases are related to the person's moral and spiritual life. More research into this area will be conducted by the medical profession in the future.

Sanford basically agrees with Tillich's view that the old reality of disease is still part of our world. Because of the negative and evil atmosphere of the world, much disease cannot be healed no matter how clear a channel a person may be for God's healing power. But there are also other blocks to healing which can be removed if a person is willing to make the effort. Sanford has emphasized the need for a re-education of the mind in order for much healing to take place. Man must realize that healing is possible through spiritual means in order for healing to take place. Sanford is also in agreement with Tournier in terms of man being created according to the image of God. That image involves the law of love, which must not be violated if man does not want to suffer the consequences. A person can condition himself to maintain the attitude of love toward all people. This attitude not only transforms others, it also has a healing effect on

the person himself.

Man's need for an awareness of his sinful, separated condition has also been emphasized throughout this investigation. Tillich points to Jesus as the Christ as the one who shows man what his essential nature is like. Jesus as the Christ is essential being manifested within the context of the existential situation. Man does not fully realize his own separated condition until he is confronted with his essential being as manifested in Christ. Once man is confronted with his own essential being, he becomes aware of how separated and disintegrated he really is. This awareness allows him to come into participation with Christ, the New Being. This participation involves the process of sanctification or transformation of the person.

Tournier also emphasizes the need for man to become aware of his own sinful condition. This awareness comes about through the act of confession. Through confession, the consciousness of man is expanded so that old resentments, fears and the like are once again brought to the surface so that they can be verbalized and healed. Like Tillich, Tournier suggests that the initiative is with the divine. If man is faithful in praying for God's guidance, God will reveal to him the things within him that are blocking healing. Likewise, the healing of these memories is effected by relying on the healing power of God working through the mind of man.

Sanford discusses a similar kind of awareness process when she speaks of allowing the spirit of Christ to walk back through the memories of a person's past in order to heal those memories causing

pain in the present. Her theory of redemption also involves this kind of healing of memories. The redemptive work Jesus did on the cross involved a participation in all the hurts and resentments of mankind. The work of redemption involves the healing of these kinds of memories.

The concept of faith has also been significant in this investigation. Tillich defines faith as being grasped by God. In this sense, faith has a gift-like quality. It is dependent on God's initiative, not man's. Once man accepts his being grasped by the divine, he sees everything in relationship to the divine. All of life takes on a new, unified meaning. According to Tillich's definition Spirit is the unity of meaning and power. The impact of the Spirit on man brings man into a unity with the whole of life if man will respond to that impact by accepting it. He becomes centered in the Divine Center of the universe. This new unified perspective creates integration of the person and is thus conducive toward health.

Tournier also sees the importance of faith in God in terms of man's need to surrender his rebellious attitudes to Him for healing. Man can maintain health by being in tune with the spark of the divine residing within him. For Tournier, however, the concept of suggestion is important to faith. Man can acquire all kinds of ailments such as stomach problems and the like through suggestions from his environment or from his own acquired belief system. These suggestions of sickness are contrary to the perfect image of God which is contained within every person.

Sanford greatly stresses the prayer of faith. This prayer of

faith involves a vivid picturing of the healing for which one is praying. Such faith enables one to see others in the perfect image of God in which they were created, and emphasizes the positive rather than the negative in people. It is this positive picturing of the person as whole and well, in harmony with God's perfect will, which seems to create the right channel needed for God's healing power to enter into another person. But such an attitude must be learned. A process of reconditioning is often necessary because the world tends to create more of a negative attitude within man. But like Tillich and Tournier, Sanford also emphasizes the fact that faith is basically a gift from God. If a person feels a lack of this miracle-producing faith, he needs to pray for it. This kind of faith is produced when man's spirit is grasped by the Holy Spirit of God. This kind of faith allows God's higher spiritual laws to transcend man's lower laws of disease and pain. The right use of these laws allows the healing process to be set into motion according to God's perfect plan.

The concept of love also plays an important role in spiritual healing. Tillich defines love as the drive toward reunion of that which is separated. Because of His love for man, God is constantly striving to bring man back into union with Himself. He is constantly striving to enable man to manifest his essential being. Jesus as the Christ was and is God's love made concrete. In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself. Love is the channel through which all healing takes place. Sanford is in agreement with this point. Faith releases the power of God's healing Spirit, but love is the

channel through which that power flows. Love accepts the person for what he is, but it also releases the power by which that person can be transformed and healed. Love sees the best in the other person. This is how God's love for man works, and on a smaller scale, this is how man's love for man works. In order for intercessory prayer to be effective, a love must exist between the one praying and the one prayed for. Without this love, all the faith in the world will not produce results. Jesus' command to love one another was not just a lot of sentimental words spoken to make man feel good. It is only by loving that the miracle of healing can be effected. Man's love for man connects him with the divine love of God. It is this connection with the divine that produces healing.

In the final analysis, it is always God's power which accomplishes all healings. All three resource persons agree on this point. Tillich emphasizes the fact that man is not to copy Christ in order to reach his goal. The New Being manifested in Jesus as the Christ transforms man as man participates in it. This is the process of sanctification. Man needs to discover the laws of healing and engage in experimentation in order to see how these laws work. But the attitude of passive surrender to God is also involved in this healing process. The knowledge that it is God who does the healing releases the person so that he can be healed. Too often the person desiring healing begins to strive too hard for that healing instead of letting go and letting God take over. The attitude of surrender is exactly opposite to the attitudes of unbelief, hubris and concupiscence which

Tillich describes under the condition of estrangement. The attitude of unbelief causes man to turn away from God and toward himself. Man depends on his own finite power which always fails in the end. The attitude of hubris causes man to elevate himself to the point where he feels that he is God. Today in a world of advanced technology, man feels that he can do anything and thus does not need God. Finally, the attitude of concupiscence causes man to have an unquenchable desire for power, wealth, knowledge and pleasure. These are the attitudes that block the healing, transforming power of God seeking expression.

The message of the whole Christian gospel is related to the healing, transformation process which is involved in redemption. The salvation process initiated by God through Jesus as the Christ has real, observable effects in the human situation. The healing of the body and the mind are both observable effects of this salvation process. As man surrenders his own self-dependent attitude, he is able to come into participation with the New Being which produces healing. When he holds onto self-dependent, self-elevating attitudes, he blocks the healing that God wants for him. Man is always left with the free choice of rejecting God's plan of health and wholeness. Man can block the healing process either by rejecting God's plan or else by not really believing that healing can result through prayer and other spiritual methods of healing.

The research into this broad area of spiritual healing needs to be increased. It may be helpful for the seminaries to include courses in their curriculum specifically dealing with spiritual healing and its

significance for the church. A few joint commissions on healing have been established in the past whereby doctors and ministers have co-operated in their attempts to help the mentally and physically ill. More of these joint commissions will emerge in the future. Doctors and ministers are beginning to see that their concerns are not all that different. As Tournier has said, any permanent kind of healing must involve the whole person. Finally, the churches are also beginning to do more research into the whole area of spiritual healing. The Order of St. Luke is one of the pioneers doing this kind of research. Many ministers are beginning to take seriously the fact that healing is a part of the church's ministry. Other ministers will soon follow in this endeavor. As more and more people begin to see the significance of the healing ministry, the concept of salvation will become quite concrete. For many in the church, salvation has always been an abstract future concept. But the work of redemption which Christ accomplished on the cross was meant to have more than an abstract effect on mankind. The redemption process which makes men whole begins now, not in some future life. This now aspect of salvation is the basis of all spiritual healing.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bittlinger, Arnold. Gnadengaben, in Speaking in Tongues, by Larry Christenson. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1968.
- Booth, Goothard. "Science and Spiritual Healing," in Healing: Human and Divine, ed. by Simon Doniger. New York: Association Press, 1957.
- _____. "The Voice of the Body," in The Voice of Illness, by Aarne Siirala. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964.
- Day, Albert. An Autobiography of Prayer. Shaker Heights, Ohio: Disciplined Order of Christ, 1952.
- _____. Letters on the Healing Ministry. Nashville: Methodist Evangelistic Materials, 1964.
- Frankl, Victor. Man's Search for Meaning. New York: Washington Square Press, 1963.
- Hoch, Dorothee. Healing and Salvation. London: Camelot Press, 1958.
- Ikin, Alice Graham. New Concepts of Healing. New York: Association Press, 1956.
- Kimper, Frank. "Musings About the Dynamics of Prayer, 1971," in "Prayer as Dialogue: Its Theory and Application," by James William Bulay, an unpublished Rel. D. Dissertation. School of Theology at Claremont, 1972.
- Sanford, Agnes. Behold Your God. Saint Paul: Macalester Park, 1958.
- _____. The Healing Gifts of the Spirit. New York: Lippincott, 1966.
- _____. The Healing Light. Saint Paul: Macalester Park, 1947.
- Sanford, Edgar. God's Healing Power. Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959.
- Tillich, Paul. The Courage to Be. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- _____. The New Being. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.
- _____. "The Relation of Religion and Health," in Religion and Health, ed. by Simon Doniger. New York: Association Press, 1958.

_____. Systematic Theology. 3 volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-1963.

Tournier, Paul. The Healing of Persons. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

_____. The Person Reborn. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

338 790

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF